

**THE TRANSITION FROM PRESCHOOL TO  
SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN  
WITH DOWN SYNDROME:  
A CHALLENGE TO REGULAR EDUCATION?**

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A thesis  
submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the Degree  
of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Education

by

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University of Canterbury  
2002

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study has involved the collaboration of many people, all of whom I wish to thank for their interest, professional and personal contributions and support.

Firstly, I am very indebted to the parents of the children in the study for sharing their experiences with me so openly and allowing me access to their children during their transitions to school. I feel privileged to have been part of those experiences.

It is always a big ask of preschools and schools to subject their practices to research over a considerable period of time, especially when the potential benefits are not immediate, but long-term. I am therefore most grateful to the staff of the kindergartens, the playcentre, the early intervention programme and the schools, who so willingly accommodated me within their demanding work loads.

I am grateful to the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee for providing me with a New Zealand Universities' Postgraduate Scholarship to pursue this research.

Many fellow-students, tutors and staff at the University Education Department have provided much support, encouragement and assistance for which I am thankful. Murray Bennett, Ria Schroder and Tania Sibley deserve a special mention. I wish to acknowledge Murray for his help with the tables, Ria for her meticulous proof-reading and Tania for her help with the final formatting.

Eleanor McDuff, a friend of many years, has given generously of her time through proof-reading final drafts, finding lost references and helping keep my spirits up during those final weeks.

And finally, a very big 'Thank you' must go to my most wonderful supervisor, Emeritus Professor Graham Nuthall, who throughout the various challenges which arose, supported me solidly and shared his wisdom, experience and enthusiasm for the topic. Without his continuing support over the years, this study would never have reached completion.





## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study using a qualitative methodology was to investigate the process of transition from preschool to school at an in-depth level for three children with Down Syndrome (DS) and two typically developing children with a view to ascertaining factors associated with effective and ineffective transitions. This begged the question, ‘What constitutes an effective transition/what is the purpose of the transition process?’ Attention, therefore needed to be focused on identifying the meaning of inclusion at the ‘chalk face’ of the preschool and school, and identifying the processes underlying it. Bearing in mind that disability theorists argue that it is not so much individual impairments that disable, but society’s response to them, this study investigated the range of roles in which the children were included in each of their two settings (preschool and school) and the contextual factors which contributed.

Findings indicated that at preschool the children with Down Syndrome (DS) were engaged in a narrower range of roles than their typically developing peers. Essentially they were included in level 1 type inclusion (interactions which did not involve any emotional connections with particular children). However, observations at school indicated that inclusion or exclusion were not within-child characteristics, but largely dependent on the context. By the end of the first week of school, one child with DS was actively included in the full range of roles characteristic for that setting (levels 1 and 2 type inclusion). Furthermore, one of the typically developing children who was included at preschool was excluded at school and experienced mostly interactions characteristic of level 1 type inclusion at school. He was unable to become part of a particular peer group or dyad due to the social dynamics of the classroom at the time. Investigation into the processes underlying each outcome indicated that to be included as a valued member in the full range of roles characteristic of that setting required that the processes involve reciprocal, equal and valuing relationships irrespective of disability. However, these processes were shaped by all levels of the schools’ educational culture and beliefs, which permeated through the curriculum, pedagogy, assessment procedures and ethos of the

institutions, which in all but one school were based on an absence of diversity as a prevailing norm.

For children to experience facilitative inclusion requires schools to adopt a philosophy of difference, which embraces disability and other differences such as race and gender as valued attributes, as opposed to deficiencies or problems.

## INTRODUCTION

“I still feel we’re in transition with David...  
with David, there’s always a feeling of uncertainty...  
The transition period is less marked and more ongoing...  
You can’t sit back and let the school take over...  
You have to monitor all the time.  
Your first interest is your child and that’s why you do it...”  
(Jane, mother of 7-year old David with DS)

During the initial stages of this study, I spoke with two mothers who had two children each (one with and one without DS) start school within the last three years. While not all experiences were unfavourable, Jane’s comments echoed those of many other parents I encountered throughout this research, in my experience as an itinerant preschool teacher facilitating children’s inclusion, and in readings about parent experiences (Bogard, 1989; Brown, 1990; Wilson, 1993; Dixon, 1994). Clearly, when the child had DS or other identifiable impairment<sup>1</sup>, the experience of transition to school and subsequent inclusion caused many more problems than when the child did not. As alluded to by Jane, parents frequently found their voices silenced or ignored, which made it difficult to resolve their concerns, and this consequently thwarted optimal outcomes for the children, their families and educators.

Also prompting this research was the consistent finding in studies of children with DS with whom I had been involved during their preschool years (Rietveld, 1986; 1989; 1990; 1991; 1994) that substantial differences in some children’s competencies emerged after school entry. The majority of these children had shown considerable competencies in literacy within their familiar settings of home, preschool and early intervention programme prior to school entry. It was therefore disconcerting to find that after some six months to seven years of schooling, many had made no further or very limited progress. For example, in the 1986 study, Subject X had a sight vocabulary of at least 10 words on school entry, but a year later, he was merely engaged in pre-reading activities as opposed to actual reading. More specifically pairs of similar-aged children with virtually identical levels of skill development on school entry were

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<sup>1</sup> Note on terminology: Throughout this thesis, the term children with impairments has been used to include children with DS and other physical, sensory, neurological and/or sensory impairments. This is in line with the New Zealand Disability Strategy (2001) and the social model of disability, which views disability not as an inevitable consequence of impairment, but as a result of social organisation. It is accepted however, that some do not view DS as an impairment (Kliewer, 1998), while others

showing vastly different developmental profiles after school entry. For example, in the study concerning the development of print-related skills (Rietveld, 1991), two same-aged girls from similar socio-economic status homes with identical print-related competencies on school entry differed substantially in their abilities two-and-one half years later. At age 7.6 years, one girl (S.M) was able to write a coherent 2-3 sentence story with minimal help, while the other child (A.G) who had once been able to print her name could no longer do so and was now only barely able to generate isolated letters of her name and these were in random order. Data concerning each child's school contexts indicated a wide range of differences in the kinds of experiences these girls and their schools participated in.

These studies suggested the immediate and distal contexts played significant roles in the kinds of experiences children encountered. I therefore wondered if it would, in future, be possible to outline processes that would facilitate improved outcomes for all children. School entry marks the beginnings of change for both the child and the school system, and the consequences of a challenge to the formal school system may become apparent. For this reason, school entry seemed the most relevant point at which to undertake a study of the factors, processes and outcomes involved. How some children with DS experience inclusion and others face exclusion, becomes transparent at school entry, and it is at this point that schools must address how they will deal with the issue of impairment and/or other differences. A further reason why school entry is important is because children's reputations at school are likely to follow them through their school careers (Alexander & Entwisle, 1988; Belsky & MacKinnon, 1994).

“...the reputations children acquire at the beginning of school may help or hinder them for many years to come. The child who gets off to a slow start carries a record of failure – both in his image and in his own records that teachers consult year in and year out” (Belsky & MacKinnon, p. 107).

The transition to school involves multiple factors, consisting of the individual, context and content. This study sought to examine, ascertain, and clarify the interaction of each factor, and identify those practices that promoted the best possible outcomes for the focal children.

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prefer the term 'disabled children/people' on account of the impairment playing the most prominent role and a valued, integral part of their identity (Saxon & Howe, 1988).

## CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The purpose of this chapter is to present:

- a) theoretical conceptualisations of disability and outline their implications for children's educational experiences in schools
- b) a review of the literature concerning inclusion
- c) a literature review concerning transitions from preschool to school
- d) a theoretical framework for viewing transition and inclusion.

Since this study focuses on the transition to school for children with and without DS (who previously did not attend regular schools), it is only in the last decade or two that such a study has been possible. Prior to the 1980s, parents of children with DS and other intellectual and sensory impairments were persuaded to institutionalise their children and/or enrol them in special educational settings (Goodwin, 2000; Hunt, 2000).

### 1.1: Theoretical Understandings of Disability

#### Rationale for segregated special education

Segregation from participation in everyday community experiences (such as not attending the same educational settings as the child's siblings) was based on a particular view of disability. Children with impairments, in particular those with intellectual impairments, were viewed as ineducable (Milofsky, 1974), unlikely to cope with family and community life and consequently, a burden to their parents (Farber, 1960; Nirje, 1969). It was therefore considered important that they be cared for and protected away from the harsh realities of society. This view is reflected in a report of the Director, Division of Mental Hygiene, printed in the Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives of New Zealand (1956),

By and large, it can be said that the intellectually 'handicapped' are happier amongst their own. They enjoy a community life in which competition and striving is not too great for their intellectual capacity. This can be achieved by residence in colonies much larger in size than is often contended (p.32).

While in the 1950s and 1960s, some children with intellectual impairments were considered educable, their education mostly took place in special educational settings. The growth in special classes and schools was justified by numerous arguments, which seemed benign in intent. These centred on the provision of smaller classes so that children with impairments would receive more individual attention, a curriculum tailored specifically to their needs, teachers who were specially trained (Ainscow & Tweddle, 1979; Meyer, 1988) and a safe environment where they would not be subject to any stress or pressure (Russ, 1999). Assumptions underlying these claims were: a) children with impairments learned differently from typically developing children, b) greater learning outcomes and self-esteem are enhanced when children with similar intellectual abilities learn together, c) mainstream classrooms were stressful and inappropriate learning environments for children with impairments because of their inability to acquire the social and academic skills required and d) children with impairments needed a greater level of skills for participation in regular settings which can best be acquired in segregated settings using behavioural technology. These arguments involved giving priority to certain socially constructed attributes over others (for instance, being perceived as intellectually able, and moving, communicating and behaving in conventional ways). Regular schools evolved to cater for children who behaved and acted within their socially constructed range of norms while special schools and classes catered for children whose abilities and attributes fell outside the lower range of these norms. Consequently, regular schools have had limited experience in catering for students with a full range of diverse characteristics.

### Personal Tragedy/Medical Model

These beliefs about disability are based on judgements about what constitutes significant social deviance. They reflect the personal tragedy view or deficit/medical model of disability (Ballard, 1995; Fulcher, 1989; Oliver, 1986). From this perspective, intellectual disability is seen as an illness, personal deficit and/or tragedy that dominates all aspects of the individual's life and ignores the role of social factors. The term 'personal tragedy' conveys an element of benign charity or pity which can lead teachers, peers and significant others in preschool and schools to respond to children with identifiable impairments in "a compensatory rather than educational way" (Alton-Lee, Rietveld, Klenner, Dalton, Diggins & Town, 2000, p. 182). This

perspective has its origins in the medical model of disability in which intellectual disability is seen as an all-encompassing illness residing in the body of the individual. The medical model with its emphasis on cure, deficits and rehabilitation has been the traditional and dominant model on which special educational practices have developed (Tomlinson, 1982). Response to the individual's 'illness' (disability) is to fix, remediate, assimilate or accept. Proponents of segregated schooling for children with impairments continue to use the personal tragedy/deficit model as a framework for their operation. The web-site of a local special school (<http://www.chch.school.nz/allenvale>, 2001) makes the following claim:

“Teachers at Allenvale School understand the children, their needs and their funny little ways and also the need for safety.”

Exclusion is easily justified from the deficit perspective. The individual is perceived as not ordinary, and different on all accounts. Hence, different care, education, life-styles and recreational activities are legitimised when the more powerful majority feel uncomfortable with the violation of familiar norms. For instance, running away behaviour (from class) is more comfortably interpreted as resulting from the intellectual deficits associated with DS than as a function of the environment, such as experiencing harassment from peers. When such violations are attributed to pathology, they become easier to manage, as the larger and more complex task of examining the culture contributing to the behaviour is not investigated. Within this paradigm, individuals with impairments are seen as less valuable members. The source of such devaluing stems from several sources: prejudice (children with DS look different), socially constructed norms reflective of particular contexts and/or more formal tests, such as IQ tests or other school-related assessments which compare the child's responses to those of other same-age children who have not had the experience of disability.

These assessments provide no information about what the child can do in the presence of supportive others, how the context hinders or supports the child's development or whether indeed the skills tested are relevant for more advanced learning or the particular environments in which the child participates. The practice of using information from either informal or formal assessments to exclude participation from



regular settings deflects attention away from human rights, the kinds of contexts conducive to effective learning for all children and the social and structural factors contributing to disability.

The personal tragedy/medical model has been criticised for obscuring the identities and personalities of individuals with impairments and classing all into a single category (O'Brien & Mount, 1991; Morris, 1997). It has also been criticised for its patriarchal approach (Corbett, 1993), its emphasis on individual deficits and its exclusive focus on the cure and treatment of the impairment whilst ignoring social and cultural factors. At the same time, some claim the personal tragedy/medical model is of some value in understanding disability and argue for its modification rather than abandonment (Corbett, 1993, Marks, 1999; Morris, 1997). Both Corbett and Morris, for instance, acknowledge the role medical and rehabilitation professions have to offer in maximising an individual's potential, but argue that the power for utilising any care and treatment should remain with the individual, not so-called experts. Marks (1999) acknowledges the importance of biological factors and the individual's subjective experiences of her/his impairments at both a conscious and unconscious level together with social and structural factors when understanding disability. She argues that disability "is an embodied relationship" (p. 611) rather than present in a particular body or environment. Clearly, while the individual personal tragedy/medical model has its limitations, in view of the biological and personal experience of disability being ignored in the social model, it seems premature to reject this model disability in its entirety. It is evident that children with physical and psychological differences, such as those posed by DS are more easily recognisable than children with less identifiable differences and that some form of accommodation and interpretation is required to explain these differences.

### Deficit Perspective and Regular Schooling

The individual deficit model adopted by schools has a long history, not only in relation to people with impairments, but in terms of other minority groups perceived as having significant differences. For example, Sarason and Doris (1979) report that 75% of the children in special education in New York in 1921 were from families who experienced poverty and/or immigrant families who were unfamiliar with the English language and American way of life. When Jacques (1991) asked principals

how they accounted for the failure of Maori children's success in regular schools, the majority cited deficits within the child and family. The Education Review Office expressed concern about the number of schools identifying the students themselves as barriers to their own learning.

“The Education Review Office analysis suggests that deficit thinking about student failure is schematic amongst New Zealand teachers and school communities” (Alton-Lee, 1998, p. 7).

Mara (1997) describes how the Parents as First Teachers programme was unsuited to Pacific Islands and other minority families because of its underlying deficit philosophy, which ignored the structural inequalities, marginalisation and oppression of its people. A more empowering parallel programme (Anau Ako Pasifika) was therefore established and implemented by and for Pacific Islands women, which focused not only on the parent-child dyad, but also on the broader social and structural systems contributing to the oppression of these minority families.

The common experience amongst all these groups considered “deficient” is a lack of conformity to the unitary standards set by the more powerful majority. These standards refer to white skin, intelligence, an absence of chromosomal abnormality and behaving and communicating in specific ways.

Oliver (1986) and Fulcher (1989) argue that the personal tragedy or deficit view with its focus on the individual serves a particular ideological function. The removal of individuals who do not conform to society's current standards may have benign intentions such as ‘catering for their individual needs’ but this ignores underlying motives involving social, economic, political and cultural considerations. A rationale for instigating ‘special education’ was so that schools could continue to function as effectively and efficiently as possible by removing children unable or unwilling to conform to the standards of behaviour required (Barton & Tomlinson, 1984). This was supported by a growth in special education professionals who were considered able to ‘objectively’ assess such candidates and prescribe suitable interventions. Through the removal of students who did not ‘fit’, special education enabled the wider education system to remain intact by preventing “teachers from recognizing anomalies in their paradigms” (Skrtic, 1991, p.169). With its focus on therapeutic

assessments and treatments at the level of the individual, this view serves to depoliticise disability as it fails to consider the social, environmental, political, professional and cultural factors, which create barriers and reduce opportunities for equal participation in society.

## **Challenges to the Deficit Model**

### Social Construction Model

The social construction model rejects the focus on the 'deficient' individual, but sees disability more as a function of social, economic and political factors, which create barriers and impede equal participation. This does not mean ignoring the very real impact of learning difficulties or the contributions the medical and other professions have to offer, but to note that the exclusion and stigmatisation experienced by people with intellectual impairments is not an inherent outcome of their biological impairment, but a consequence of social and political oppression. Instead of devaluing differences and viewing them as unusual, special or in need of remediation or fixing, the social construction model sees disability and differences as ordinary, something to be expected and valued and hence catered for in all aspects of the school system. Responsibility for differences is accepted and expected by regular class teachers. Children are not placed into segregated educational facilities, nor is responsibility for their education handed over to professionals or para-professionals. Instead of excluding children from the existing curriculum when it appears unsuitable, the context is arranged from the outset to take into account the variation in abilities, interests and other attributes of all class members. In the classroom, this involves teachers managing the context, curriculum and environment in ways that enable all students to participate in educational rather than compensatory experiences. From this perspective, disability or differences are not seen as all-encompassing static states, but attributes (along with others such as ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs, interests) which may become more apparent in certain contexts than others. For example, some students will need more support during sport while others may need more during reading. Religious beliefs may preclude some children from attending the religious instruction offered in schools or access to certain technology irrespective of disability. Thus, disability like any other attribute or construct may shift in focus depending on the context. Rather than intervening at the individual level, the social

model of disability focuses on social, environmental and structural factors, which enhance or impede full social, academic, vocational and other participation in life.

While the social construction view of disability has contributed significantly to the lives of people with impairments in that it has challenged the widespread oppressive, deficit model, some recent works have noted its limitations (Marks, 1999; Tregaskis, 20002). Critiques of the social construction view claim that it is not a holistic theory and ignores facets of the experience of disability such as the role of biology and the individual's subjective experiences at both conscious and unconscious levels. A more holistic definition of disability is likely to evolve over the 21<sup>st</sup> century, given that neither the personal tragedy nor the social models provide a complete theoretical perspective. However, given this situation, the more enabling perspective offered by the social model, in terms of its focus on the contexts and structures, which disable rather than individual limitations provides an important focus for this thesis. The effects of school contexts on children who show slow progress have received minimal attention compared to the more prevalent focus on individual deficits and their remediation (Alton-Lee, 1998).

### Origins of the Social Construction Model

A number of societal changes over the last two to three decades have altered perspectives on disability and other minority groups. These have prompted a questioning of the appropriateness of segregation on two main grounds: The first concerns human rights and the value placed on individuals in society. The second focuses on the growing body of evidence that facilitative inclusion produces positive outcomes and processes for children with and without impairments, their teachers, parents and the wider community.

The Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s resulted in increased concern over the rights of minorities (Richardson, 1984) as young people rebelled against the values of the previous generation. The climate of egalitarian social change was supportive of the deinstitutionalisation of persons with impairments. The normalisation principles put forward by Nirje (1969) and Wolfensberger (1969) also provided a clear alternative to the personal tragedy view of disability. Nirje (1969) described normalisation in terms of participation in the normal rhythms and routines of the human life cycle,

Normalization means...a normal rhythm of the day, a normal rhythm of the week, with a home to live in, a school or work to go to...normal developmental experiences of the life cycle, having a range of choices...living in a normal neighbourhood (p. 231).

As a consequence, parents, some professionals, groups of people with impairments and their supporters started questioning the medical model of disability and requesting services that extended the same rights and opportunities available to those of the more powerful dominant culture.

Other changes in society (for example, the blending of sexual and occupational roles) brought about by the effects of the civil rights, women's movements and other consciousness-raising groups led to the rise of postmodernism. Postmodern thought, which has also affected ways of thinking about disability, rejects the notion of one objective reality which can be isolated into discrete elements, measured (by experts) and used as a prescription for how others ought to function. Instead, it involves an examination of the ideologies maintaining those "scientific beliefs" or common-sense notions (for example, 'the doctor/psychologist knows best') of how the world should function. It questions why the beliefs and actions, of professionals are privileged above those who are in receipt of professional services. Foucault (1967, 1973, 1977, 1982) has described how people are constructed as social subjects through disciplinary techniques such as the 'medical-gaze' (1973) and the discourses associated with particular professions. Thus, while the surveillance of children with impairments may be intended to facilitate their welfare, it also constructs them as objects of oppression, thus obliterating them as individuals. Post-modern thinking values alternative ways of knowing and experiencing the world, especially those based on an individual's personal experiences.

At the same time, more advanced understandings concerning the role of contexts in development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Shipe & Shotwell, 1965) and advances in behavioural technology (Sidman & Stoddard, 1966) raised questions concerning the untapped potential of people with impairments. Preliminary developmental data from children with DS who had participated in early intervention programmes were encouraging (Bricker, 1978; Champion, 1982; Hayden & McGinnes, 1977) as were

the positive outcomes from participation in integrated educational settings (Pieterse and Center, 1984; Rietveld, 1986). The data led parents and educators to raise expectations for children with impairments and start campaigning for their rights, such as access to appropriate medical care and participation in regular education (Bogard, 1989; Dixon, 1994).

In New Zealand, the culmination of these shifts in thinking led to the Education Act (1989) extending to children with impairments the right to receive their education at regular schools and the promotion of policies to enable the inclusion of children with impairments in preschools (see Human Rights Act 1993, Section 57; the Ministry of Education Early Childhood Charter Guidelines, 1996a and Te Whariki: Ministry of Education Early Childhood Curriculum, 1996b).

### Rationale for inclusion

A number of outcomes are envisaged from participation in inclusive education which are less likely or unable to occur in segregated settings.

The first of these relates to a key purpose of the school – the acquisition of advanced ways of thinking, functioning and being, and a place where these outcomes can optimally occur. While initially, it was thought that children with ‘severe intellectual’ impairments could not profit from participation in regular classrooms, more recent research indicates that most children are able to benefit from inclusive education (Biklen, 1985; Erwin & Guintinni, 2000; Rex, 2000). Inclusion, too, can provide positive experiences facilitative of living in an inclusive society for classmates of children with impairments (Biklen, Corrigan & Quick, 1989; Kishi & Meyer, 1994) whilst not jeopardising their academic development (Staub & Peck, 1994/5).

Furthermore, studies of children with intellectual impairments attending special and regular schools showed no superior outcomes for children attending special schools (Dunn, 1968; Frampton, 1981; Rietveld, 1989). In fact, social and academic outcomes generally favoured children who attended regular classrooms (Cunningham, Glenn, Lornenz, Cuckle & Shepperdson, 1998; Frampton, 1981; Rietveld, 1989).

While it was thought that children needed certain skills to participate in less restrictive settings and that the development of those skills optimally occurred in segregated

settings, it is now recognised that a denial of access to the settings in which those skills, beliefs and attitudes are needed, actually restricts their development (Kunc, 1984). While segregation was based upon the presumption that teachers in segregated settings are better able to teach children with impairments than those in regular settings, research suggests that effective regular and special class teachers are more alike than different in what they do in the classroom (Gottlieb, Alter & Gottlieb, 1983). Inclusion is based on the assumption that children are more alike than different, hence they do not require vastly different teaching or a separate curriculum. Competent teachers can effectively teach all students, given a supportive context (Erwin & Guintini, 2000; Kliewer, 1998; Rex, 2000).

Distal effects expected from inclusion involve the regular preschool and school supporting the family's vision that the child belongs in the community irrespective of ability. It is also expected that the child's peers, teachers, aides and significant others involved with the preschool/school will learn to be more accepting, tolerant, less fearful and more comfortable with people who have impairments. That is, they will see beyond the disability, be less fearful of human differences and interact with the person with relative ease in a respectful and valuing manner. Facilitative inclusion has the potential to reverse the negatively stereotyped views of people with impairments and enable them to be known on an individual basis as valued citizens with unique contributions to offer. This is necessary to enable the broader goal stated by Brown (1995) to occur, that is, "the regular education classroom of today is the integrated workplace of tomorrow" (p. 142).

Thus, inclusion can be justified on the basis of a number of grounds: moral, human right and developmental/educational.

While inclusion is essentially a moral issue dependent on the kind of society we envisage (Ballard, 1998; Biklen, 1985), it is insufficient to have children with impairments enrolled in regular schools on the basis of their "rights" alone without taking into account the nature of their experiences. Inclusion involves considerably more than a place, as noted by Giangreco, Baumgart and Doyle (1995)

Inclusion represents a set of values (for example, individualization, interdependence, equity, access, diversity, community) from which educational decisions are made. Inclusive education seeks to build on the diversity of students' characteristics as a strength rather than a liability (p. 274).

Despite enrolment in a regular setting, children's experiences may not reflect the values underlying inclusion. In fact, Kliever (1998) and Farrell's (2000) studies show that there is a variety of ways children can experience inclusion. Children may attend a regular classroom and be shunned by their peers. They may be unavailable as potential playmates or task partners if constrained by classroom or other social structures (for example, being shadowed by a teacher-aide or older child). It is therefore important to investigate the nature of children's 'inclusive' experiences.

## **1.2: Review of Research on Inclusion**

The research on inclusion is based on a range of different meanings of the term. Most commonly, educational inclusion is described in the pragmatic sense as inclusion in the educational settings that children with impairments attend or should attend if they did not have impairments. The purpose of inclusion is frequently based on arguments concerning children's rights (Ballard, 1998; Biklen, 1985) and an emphasis on the social rather than academic outcomes or processes for children with and without impairments (Guralnick, 1999; Strully & Strully, 1989; Wilkinson, 1996).

### Studies carried out in the 1970s and early 1980s

Studies during this era often focused on whether or not children with impairments made greater social and/or academic gains in regular or segregated settings. While some studies showed inclusion provided superior opportunities and outcomes (Brinker, 1985; Espiner, Wilton & Glynn, 1985; Frampton, 1981; Haring & Krug, 1975; Kaplon-Sanoff, 1979), others showed the same finding for some, but not all of the children studied (Carlberg & Kavale, 1980; Hvizdoz, 1980; Ipsa, 1981), and others showed that despite enrolment in regular settings, the children with impairments were isolated and hence social and other outcomes were negligible (Sammel, Gottlieb & Robinson, 1979; Sinson & Wetherick, 1981).



A study providing a clear example of the kinds of benefits children with impairments can experience in regular educational settings was undertaken by Espiner et al. (1985). They investigated the social acceptance and academic progress of five children with mild mental retardation (aged 7-10 years) who were transferred from the school's special class into three regular classrooms six months prior to the study. Four groups were selected as a comparison. These consisted of: i) five children of the same age and sex who remained in the special class, ii) five children in the same class who were matched for age and sex and were rated by the teacher as showing average adjustment, and iii) four children (2 girls and 2 boys) who were rated as 'poorly adjusted.' Each of these 19 children was observed during free-play at lunchtime on five separate occasions over a two-month-period in the playground and during developmental sessions in the classroom. Since the children in the special class did not attend developmental sessions, they were observed in the playground only. The researchers recorded not only the level of play (unoccupied, onlooker, solitary, parallel, associative, cooperative), using the Parten Scale (see Parten & Newham, 1943), but also the kind of group she/he was involved with (same-class, different-class, children with impairments or not), the gender and size of the group and nature of the activity.

Results indicated that levels of social acceptance did not differ significantly for the integrated, averagely-adjusted and poorly-adjusted groups. The integrated children spent slightly more time engaged in the two highest forms of play (associative and cooperative) than the other two groups and they engaged in very little inappropriate behaviour. All three groups spent most of their time interacting with their own classmates and very little with children from other classes. This occurred also in the special class. The authors concluded that the integrated setting offered the children considerably enhanced learning opportunities from interacting with children with a greater range of skills. The children who remained in the special classes continued to play with each other and were deprived of such interaction. Comparisons were also made between each of the integrated children and their classmates academically. Apart from one integrated child who was in the lowest 16% for reading and another in the lowest 16% for spelling, the integrated children performed within the mean range for their classes on word recognition, spelling, mathematics and creative writing. This finding was supported by interview data from their classroom teachers. The

authors conclude that in a supportive context (the teachers and principal concerned were supportive of the move to inclusive classrooms for these particular children), children with impairments can benefit from participation in regular classes both academically and socially.

### Limitations of earlier studies

The authors of the majority of these earlier studies often failed to take into account the contextual factors that impinged on the children's functioning, nor did they identify processes and outcomes for children without identifiable impairments (an important aspect if we aspire to an inclusive society). Since inclusion was viewed as successful assimilation into the existing culture, the ethical/moral issues concerning segregated versus integrated placements were also not raised. Most reflected the deficit view of disability, focusing almost exclusively on child outcomes without examining the factors contributing to those outcomes. Thus, if inclusion 'failed' (for example, the child was rejected by peers or made little academic progress), it was usually attributed to factors within the child as noted by Gresham (1982).

If the child's level of social skill does not suggest that he or she would function successfully in a mainstreamed setting, then he or she should be placed in a more structured setting until the required social skill level has been obtained.  
(p. 430)

Outcome measures used in these earlier studies often reflected unitary notions of inclusion such as the amount of time spent in social play (Rietveld, 1986, 1989; Marshall, Keating, McDonald & Snart, 1986; Okagaki, Diamond, Kontos & Hestenes, 1998; Brown, Odom, Li & Zercher, 1999) implying that more is better, time spent on-task (Rietveld, 1986; Reiber, Goetz, Baer & Green, 1977) implying that on-task behaviour equates with meaningful learning, sociograms of likeability (Pieterse & Center, 1984), formal tests of reading and mathematics achievement, self concept scales, IQ tests and sociometric tests (Center & Ward, 1984) and teacher satisfaction scales (Center & Ward, 1984; Ward & Center, 1988). Ward & Center's (1988) study concluded that even when teachers held low academic expectations resulting in minimal academic gains, children's inclusion could still be considered successful when teachers displayed a high level of commitment to the policy and practice of inclusion. They viewed children being granted an unconditional placement as a

success and a similar non-specific outcome measure (the child not being asked to repeat a grade) was used by Conn-Powers, Ross-Allen and Holburn (1990). It would seem from these latter two studies that inclusion was merely conceptualised as a child's physical presence and her/his retaining of that presence, without any consideration as to the nature of her/his experiences.

These studies generally also failed to take into account issues relating to the broader school context, such as what the children were learning, how presentation of the curriculum facilitated or hindered their inclusion, or the nature of their social relationships. An assumption underscoring many of these studies pertains to the 'fixed nature' of schools. Essentially schools are portrayed as rational and effective organisations which cannot (or should not?) change, with experts placed in the role of ascertaining which categories of children are most likely to benefit from them as noted by Center and Ward (1984) who quote Watts (1978),

"Well-designed research must determine what population can best be served by mainstreaming" (p. 28).

Another issue with some of the unitary measures used to assess successful inclusion, such as success on school-based tasks, is that they present a static view of the students' performance on the basis of measures designed for typically developing children. It is known that children with impairments may demonstrate their abilities in unconventional ways (Crossley & McDonald, 1980; Kliwer, 1998) and therefore assessments and the way they are undertaken for typically developing children may not be suitable for children with impairments as Biklen (2000) reports,

The good teacher sees his or her task as that of finding a better strategy, where the teacher is a coach rather than a judge, someone who looks for and fosters dialogue, and where demonstrated ability evolves through a reflective process rather than a contested one. (p. 345)

### Intervention studies to improve child performance

In line with the perspective that there is one single dominant culture of which membership may be obtained through a reduction of differences, the recommendations in many of the studies frequently focused on the remediation of children with impairments. Thus, if a child was perceived to be 'failing' in a regular

setting, it might be recommended that she/he be removed to a more segregated setting until she/he acquired sufficient skills to return to the mainstream (see Cascade Model, Deno, 1970). Alternatively, it might be suggested that the child should be taught additional skills in the mainstream to enhance her/his 'success' and so be more like the dominant mainstream culture. Professionals and experts usually defined the criteria for success, without attending to the dynamics of peer group behaviour and ecology of the setting. For example, Gannon (1983) outlines the kinds of social skills children with impairments need in mainstream classrooms because of teachers and peers' likely resistance to accommodate children with socially deviant behaviours. The possibility of the dominant culture benefiting or having a moral obligation to accommodate the existing and additional diversity in the student population (through inclusion) is not considered.

The poor tolerance for socially deviant behaviours shown by mainstream teachers and the likelihood of low levels of peer social acceptance for mainstreamed handicapped students are both problematic for any successful mainstreaming effort. The solution to the problem is clear; rather than attempt to change the teacher and/or peer expectations... direct assistance should be provided for the handicapped child to learn appropriate social skills for mainstreaming settings. (Gannon, 1983, p. 15)

A typical study of this era is Sinson and Wetherick's (1981) investigation into the inclusion of children with DS in regular playgroups. Despite the children's participation at the various activities in virtually identical ways to their peers, all the children with DS remained socially isolated from them. Consequently, the authors query the value of inclusion for the children with DS and focus on the nature of their specific deficits as opposed to examining the contextual factors constraining their inclusion.

On ascertaining that children with impairments were often not socially included by their typically developing classmates, several studies followed which focused on the implementation and evaluation of various remedial programmes to improve their skills in order for them to assimilate more successfully. These studies often involved social skills training (for example, Gresham, 1982; Hennessy-Powell & Lindeman, 1983) as some "experts" believed that deficits in social skills precluded children from attending regular schools. Westwood (1982) citing Goldman's work states,

“Goldman (1980) is adamant that handicapped children should only be mainstreamed when they have demonstrated the social skills to profit from regular class placement” (p. 24).

Other studies investigated (i) the effects of teaching children with impairments greater attending behaviours (Reiber, Goetz, Baer & Green, 1977; Strain & Pierce, 1977); (ii) peer imitation skills (Rauer, Cooke & Apolloni, 1978; Rietveld, 1981); (iii) using typically developing peers as tutors to teach academic skills (Cooke, Heron, Heward & Test, 1982); and (iv) general play skills (Rose, 1981). Most of these studies demonstrated that children with impairments acquired a greater level of skill in some areas as well as second-order effects, such as being liked by students without impairments. However, the focus in all these studies was primarily on the students’ differences (interpreted as deviant and in need of remediation), not the wider school culture which failed to cater for the diversity in its student population.

### Qualitative Studies

A shift in the construction of disability research occurred as the result of several factors. People from various minority groups started to resist being involved in practices, including research, which were oppressive and disempowering (see Graham Hinangaroa Smith, 1990 for discussion on this issue for Maori people and Turnbull, Blue-Banning, Behr & Kerns, 1986 for discussion of this issue in relation to parents of children with impairments and professionals). Disability theorists, notably the British educational sociologists, Abberley (1987), Barton (1988), Tomlinson (1982), Oliver (1988, 1990) and Australian, Gillian Fulcher (1989, 1990, 1995) claimed that a focus on the individual’s special needs detracted from the real issue of schools failing to provide an appropriate education for all students. In their investigations of historical, cultural and socio-political processes underlying school practices, they claimed that aspects of schools’ structures, beliefs, curricula and so forth disable students more than any individual student impairment. Such thinking led to different kinds of beliefs concerning the conceptualisation of inclusion in research, changes which incorporated investigating the dominant school culture and how this interacted with the notion of catering for all students. Consequently, a rise in the number of studies using qualitative methodologies emerged.

Empirical studies using a qualitative methodology provided a more holistic approach to the study of inclusion, taking into account variables/processes not only in the microsystem and other (more distal settings), but issues underlying or impinging on those processes. Many of these studies highlighted how processes enacted in the classroom mitigated against or alternatively, facilitated the inclusion of children with impairments.

#### 1.2.1: Studies of Inclusion showing Unfavourable Outcomes

Philips (1997) undertook two qualitative case studies concerning the social relationships of two girls (seven and eight years old) with multiple impairments in their respective schools. Data collection involved participant observation in classrooms, playgrounds, dining room (of one school) and class camp (of the other), and parent interviews and school document analysis. Approximately 25 hours of observations took place for case study one (Sally) and 50 hours for case study two (Sarah).

Sally attended a regular classroom in a large school of approximately 300 pupils, which had two specialist units, one for children with intellectual impairments and the other for children with physical impairments. The school had a high proportion of children with various identifiable impairments. Sally was withdrawn from the class at regular intervals to participate in various therapies (speech, physiotherapy and music) and activities (such as lunch and toileting) in the physically disabled unit's facilities. The school claimed to be inclusive in its charter "Inclusive education is the cornerstone of the programme at Sunshine School for children with special education needs" although there was no definition of what was meant by inclusion.

A medicalised and deficit view of disability permeated the culture of Sally's school. Students were viewed as having individual problems that needed fixing. Sally was compartmentalised into segments, each of which required the services of a different staff member. For example, the person in charge of the dining room was responsible for Sally's eating and toileting, the physiotherapist and occupational therapists were responsible for her physical development and functional skills, the music therapist and speech and language therapist were in charge of her communication, while the teacher-aide was responsible for her learning in the classroom. Some aspects of

Sally's life were ignored because there was no therapist to address them (for example, developing friendships).

Sally was rarely in the classroom without her teacher-aide, which resulted in limited opportunities for her and her classmates to interact. If she was not being withdrawn for one of her therapies or working separately in the classroom with the teacher-aide, her relationships with her classmates were further constrained by school rules and the classroom teacher's style and organisation of the classroom. Philips identified three school rules which interfered with Sally's inclusion amongst her peers. These were: 1) children were not allowed to touch one another, 2) peers were not allowed to push children in wheelchairs and 3) the dining area was out of bounds to typically developing children. The no pushing rule meant that Sally had minimal opportunities for interacting with her classmates at lunchtime because there was no adult to push her and the wheelchair brakes were always on which Sally could not release. No touching meant that Sally who had minimal verbal communication was unable to use this form of communication to relate to her peers. Banning typically developing children from the dining room resulted in children with impairments and their classmates being separated from one another at one of the most social times of the school day.

Sally's desk was also positioned at back of the room facing the back wall, which precluded Sally from physically interacting with any of her classmates. Since the teacher did not approve of any talking, children were also wary of responding to Sally's initiations when she occasionally did manage to wheel herself over to her classmates.

Sally was largely invisible. She experienced very few interactions with her classmates and children from other parallel classes. They often ignored her (and other children with impairments) even when they were unable to avoid her such as needing to pass her after singing.

The kinds of relationships Sally had with her peers lacked equality and reciprocity. Instead, the language and behaviour used was not generally typical of play encounters between seven and eight year old children, but more reflective of a hierarchical

relationship such as the relationship between teacher and child.

Peers were rewarded by the teachers' attention for interacting with Sally in approved ways such as through reinforcing the school rules. When Philips queried a peer why she was encouraging Sally to follow school rules such as pushing her own wheelchair, the child replied that it would make the teacher-aide very happy. Both the teacher and teacher-aide modelling and reinforcing children for engaging in controlling interactions, interfered with their learning more appropriate ways of interacting.

The second case study (Sarah) highlighted many of the same issues. School procedures (such as pulling Sarah out for remedial work and the class teacher taking no responsibility for including Sarah as a valued member but assigning this responsibility to her teacher-aide) contributed to her being excluded by her peer group. As with Sally, Sarah's peers also interacted with her in a way which mirrored the teacher-aide's controlling manner. That these contextual factors were contributing to Sarah's exclusion at school became evident when some of these factors were absent on the class camp. This led to important differences in both the quantity and quality of peer interactions.

Examples of the teacher-aide hindering Sarah's inclusion were evident on many occasions. For example, she asked the researcher to save two seats on the bus next to each other, one for her and the other for Sarah assuming that she would sit beside Sarah. On another occasion, she assumed Sarah lacked the skills to participate in a team activity, so that when Sarah lined up with her classmates, the teacher-aide told her to sit down which she did. However, when the researcher publicly gave her permission to participate shortly afterwards, her peers encouraged Sarah's participation and Sarah completed the activity successfully.

Philips' case studies illustrate how aspects of the school context can preclude children with impairments from being included as valued and integral members of their classrooms and hence limit the kinds of opportunities available for developing social relationships, which in turn hinders their access to other culturally-valued learnings. Bruni (1982) undertook a case study of a child with DS (Faye) in her first year at a regular primary school. Faye attended a regular classroom with six other girls and 11



boys. She was included for most activities, except each day she received half an hour of speech therapy and spent an hour in a resource class. When in class, she participated in all of the regular activities, although she often received a simplified worksheet.

The teacher had certain expectations for her class and communicated and enforced them consistently. These involved management, discipline, school work and peer-relationship issues. However, while the teacher applied these rules consistently to the class, they seldom applied to Faye to whom she applied a different set of expectations. These essentially had the effect of alienating Faye from her classmates. Thus, while the majority of the class were expected to seek and give help to one another, the teacher always rushed over to help Faye, precluding Faye and her peers from learning to help one another.

A rule in this class involved the expectation that children respect one another's personal belongings. However, the teacher not only failed to apply this rule to Faye (who had a tendency to take items belonging to others), but she failed to support the victims of Faye's "sticky fingers," who often exhausted their repertoire of skills to cope. Furthermore, there were times when Faye's "stealing" was rewarded, such as when Faye took Ellen's cupcake. Ellen complained to the teacher and the teacher returned the cupcake to Ellen. However, when Ellen complained that she did not want to eat it after Faye had eaten some of it, the teacher gave the cupcake back to Faye to finish, thus rewarding her for taking others' property. Such double standards contributed to Faye's alienation from her peers.

Faye was not given the opportunity to learn the class rules and her constant infringement of the rules contributed to her being seen as an 'outsider.' Thus, while Faye took part in all the activities of the class, she experienced very little peer interaction, spending much of her time alone. Even the children whom the teacher described as very quiet or withdrawn experienced considerably more social interaction than Faye. What peer interaction Faye did experience was of a different quality from the typically developing children. Faye's peers related to her as mini-teachers or as persons in authority. She experienced none of the kinds of pleasantries, greetings, sharing of materials, discussions about school work, help-giving or help-

seeking that the other children engaged in with each other. Children avoided Faye and often stared at her. They also acted negatively towards her by hitting, mocking, making negative facial expressions and overt rejection. She was also the topic of secret conversations. By the differing expectations placed respectively on Faye and her classmates, neither were given the opportunities in which effective social and academic inclusion could develop.

Another study using mostly qualitative methods, which also found that children with impairments were often excluded, was undertaken by Wolfberg, Zercher, Lieber, Capell, Matias, Hanson and Odom, (1999). This study investigated the inclusion within peer cultures of 10 children with significant impairments in six 'inclusive' preschools.

Eight of the 10 children had various forms of developmental delays; one had a physical impairment (cerebral palsy) and another, a profound hearing impairment. The five female and five male children who were from low to middle socio-economic backgrounds ranged in age from 4.3 to 5.6 years. Three major themes emerged. The first involved the range of ways all the children with impairments expressed their desire to participate in peer culture. The second involved the variety of ways the children experienced inclusion. The third involved how all the children except two (a girl with cerebral palsy and a boy with autism and pervasive developmental disorder) experienced exclusion.

Exclusion was experienced as the following kinds of periods of brief or prolonged social isolation:

**Apathy and Indifference:** For at least half of the children with impairments, peers rarely initiated interactions with them. Instead, they played around them as if they were invisible and ignored their presence. At times, peers totally ignored the child's interest in their activities.

**Misinterpreting and overlooking social cues:** Peers also misinterpreted and overlooked children's attempts to be included in peer cultural activities. Thus,

children failed to recognise and respond to children's social cues. Clear verbal attempts to join in on the part of the children with impairments were also ignored as well as some of the children's less conventional attempts at expressing an interest in being included such as expressing excitement about the bats on someone's nap-time blanket.

**Conflicts over space and property:** Conflicts over space and property resulted in exclusion for over half the children. Such incidents often occurred when property or space was used in an imaginative game and the children with impairments lacked the same imaginative skills. At times, conflicts turned into power struggles involving tug-of-wars over materials and physical aggression.

**Tattle-tales, gossip and cliques:** At least half of the children with impairments were excluded by their peers for violating peer group norms. This was evident by peers telling tattle tales (making public announcements about the child), gossiping (telling another child about her/him in a "we" against "her/him" manner) and forming a social clique which involved excluding the child. Another way peers made it evident that they excluded a particular child from their peer group was by telling other adults. For example, "A girl in Tammy's class announced to her mother, 'There goes the crazy' when Tammy passed by them in the hallway" (p. 80).

Peers also deliberately avoided close proximity and/or social interaction with some of the children with impairments, by avoiding sitting near them and by not choosing them for important parts in group games.

The sociometric peer rating data also supported these findings illustrating the exclusion of the majority of children. Their peers ranked six of the eight children who experienced exclusion as among the least desirable playmates.

The conclusions raise the issue of whether or not adults are able to influence group processes in such a way that they facilitate peer group inclusion. Since the study did not examine the influence of adults on peer culture, the authors are unable to explain the interesting finding that the two children in the one preschool (p. 78) did not experience any exclusion from peer culture. Given that these children's impairments

and background details appear similar to some of the other participants, it seems plausible that adults can impact on group processes in ways that enhance or mitigate against children being included into various peer cultures.

Wartmann's observational data concerning the social inclusion of nine children with impairments during lunch and morning tea breaks during their first month of school, indicated that while they were not necessarily ignored or actively excluded, they did experience exclusion. Peers who were more dominant often coerced them into roles, left them on the periphery or treated them like objects. She described the way a new entrant girl, whose task it was to 'mind' a new entrant boy with special needs in the playground left him there for several minutes while she played with other friends. She then returned to him.

The girl then puts both her arms on his shoulders and moves him towards another crack (on the playground). She does not say anything to him and he moves in the direction she pushes him. The girl runs off again and Ricky turns and stares into the playground. He is there on his own for 3 minutes and no children come near him. (p. 40)

The study showed that all inclusion is not equal and that even though children can look as if they are included with others, the kinds of interactions they experienced were not necessarily conducive to the kinds of developmental or social outcomes envisaged.

Inclusion however, is not merely a social issue, although being a valued member of a peer group and seeing oneself and being seen by others as a member of a peer culture which involves being "deeply involved in the production and reproduction of that culture" (Vygotsky, 1978, p.82) is a necessary prerequisite for other kinds of learning. Gaining access to the culturally-valued skills and knowledge facilitated in schools involves factors and processes beyond membership of a peer group and agreement with the explicit agenda. To investigate some of these processes, Kollar, Anderson and Palincsar (1994) studied how five typically developing 12-year-old children worked together on a collaborative science project.

The group were involved in understanding a science problem. They had to try out different solutions to the problem and keep a journal of their results. Towards the end of the activity, each group was required to present a poster to the class.

The five students were: i) Nick, who did well in science, was confident and was generally well-liked, ii) Sandra, an African-American female who also did well in science and was well-organised, well-liked, respected and motivated, iii) Adam who could be shy, but was capable and reasonably well- liked and respected, iv) Kyle, a black male who was average at science, sensitive and caring and co-operated well with others and v) Lisa, who usually performed below average in science and often copied other members' work as she did not understand it or got behind. She was unsure of herself socially and academically and sometimes watched and listened to others while at other times acted out or played dumb.

The results of interest to this review focus mainly on Lisa. Despite her physical presence, the higher-status boys excluded her from the more important tasks involving hypothesis-formation and explanations, by ignoring her ideas and reinforcing her lower status. At the same time, Lisa lacked the confidence and perceived ability to assert herself and her ideas. Consequently, the exclusion she experienced had the potential of depriving her of more advanced understandings of the topic and reinforcing her perceived inability.

While all of the students were motivated to contribute to the group's work and each found something to do to help, some students were more successful at having their ideas included and influencing the direction of the group than others. The boys dominated the discussion. At one stage when Lisa made a valid contribution, it was ignored. Lisa then reverted to helping Sandra write things on the group sheet. Later she made another attempt at contributing to the discussion. However, one of the students (Adam) mimicked her for opening her mouth, then hesitating. This had the effect of reducing her confidence even though her attempt at reporting her observations was accurate. However, because Lisa lacked confidence and had little power in the group, she did not persevere with her reporting of the observations and left the group to sharpen a pencil. Interestingly, after Lisa's failed attempt, Sandra (due to her higher status and greater confidence) was listened to, her ideas were put

on the poster and when she was interrupted by Adam, she was assertive and completed what she wanted to say. During compilation of the poster, Lisa, Nick and Kyle all made minor errors. However, Nick reprimanded Lisa and Kyle for their mistakes and others in the group criticised Lisa and Kyle more severely for their mistakes, although they were of no greater consequence than Nick's.

This study shows how children can be socially included, but indirectly excluded from the content of the explicit curriculum. Children with impairments in regular schools are as likely to be subject to these kinds of processes as any other student, possibly more so, given the deviant role they have been ascribed historically. Therefore, attention needs to be focused on the social processes occurring in both the explicit and informal curriculum, given that an important purpose of schools is to enhance children's skills and understandings in culturally valued subject areas.

Summary: Each of these reviewed studies has highlighted how aspects of the children's social contexts played a major role in their exclusion. A common factor in the reviewed studies was children participating in classrooms and schools using processes and procedures derived from the medical/deficit view of disability. Children for example, were excluded from their classrooms for various therapies to improve or 'fix' their deficits and subject to different norms and expectations, which interfered with their inclusion. Peers were also restricted in learning how they might interact more appropriately. For instance, they were rewarded for engaging in certain kinds of relationships, such as mini-teachers. However, in some studies, it transpired that peers were not always lacking in appropriate skills, but that they did not always have a sufficiently supportive context in which to use them. Finally, one study highlighted the interactive nature of inclusion/exclusion. In this case, not only did the student's peers facilitate her exclusion, but in turn, her own beliefs about herself (perceived incompetence at science) and her limited social skills did not allow access to more advanced academic understandings and more mature social relationships.

### 1.2.2: Studies of Inclusion showing Favourable Outcomes

Other research studies have shown that inclusion leads to enhanced academic and social outcomes (Rex, 2000; Ryndak, Downing, Jacqueline & Morrison, 1995) and 'tools' such as memory and language to enhance those outcomes (Laws, Byrne &

Buckley, 2000). For students without impairments, inclusion led to feeling more comfortable with people with impairments and other differences. This reduced fear led to a greater willingness to interact and possibly befriend someone with a disability (Staub, Schwartz, Galluci & Peck, 1994) and a greater awareness of everyone's value and contribution (Ballard & MacDonald, 1998; York, van der Cook, MacDonald, Heise-Neff & Caughey, 1992). Other identified outcomes include: students learning how to interact respectfully with their classmates with impairments, such as by asking before pushing someone in a wheelchair (Alton-Lee et al., 2000), looking at and using a loud enough voice when speaking to someone with visual, hearing and cognitive impairments (Erwin & Guintini, 2000), enhanced self-esteem (Staub et al., 1994), greater personal commitment to principles of human rights and equity including advocacy (Biklen, Corrigan & Quick, 1989; Peck, Donaldson & Pezzoli, 1990) and the participation in mutually satisfying relationships including friendships (Staub, 1998). Teachers have also reported personal transformations and favourable outcomes from their experiences of including children with impairments even when wary and sceptical at the outset (Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman & Schattman, 1993; Rietveld, 1989). Parents of children without impairments too have described benefits to their children from participating in inclusive classrooms (Rietveld, 1989, p. 68; Staub et al., 1994). Clearly, multiple favourable processes and outcomes can occur as a consequence of inclusive education.

Erwin and Guintini's (2000) ethnographic early childhood study describing the inclusion of a 3-year-old boy (Timmy) with multiple impairments in a non-profit childcare centre catering for 15 children between one and three years is one which illustrates not only the outcomes for Timmy and his peers, but the deliberate processes engaged in to achieve those outcomes. Timmy who was three and the oldest child in the group experienced multiple impairments including severe hearing loss, visual impairment and overall developmental delays. He received occupational and speech therapy at the centre both within the natural play context and on a pull-out basis. The centre staff consisted of a head teacher, a full-time special education teacher, an assistant teacher and various trainee teachers. Participant-observation supplemented by more formal interviews with the head teacher and special education teacher took place over a 6-month period.

Three major themes emerged from both the interview and observational data.

i) Shared and Meaningful Experiences: Being an active participant in the centre's peer culture (distinguishable from the culture jointly created by teachers and children or teachers alone) was the first criterion of membership. The staff supported rituals such as banging hands on the table before snack-time, even if they encouraged some modifications to ensure minimal disruption to proceedings. Timmy actively participated in some of the rituals, even initiating some of the more popular ones such as the hand-banging before snack-time.

ii) Active participation or "belonging" within the classroom community: These were shared routines created by the children and teachers such as arrival time, snack and circle times. As the year proceeded, Timmy's level of participation in all these routines increased. For example, he did more of the actions of the songs and participated in the shared experience of tidying up.

iii) Variety of interpersonal interactions: Children were generally involved in a variety of interpersonal interactions with their classmates beyond their participation in shared routines and the peer culture rituals. Because of the children's very young ages, interactions were brief and children showed no consistent pattern of preferred playmates. The teachers encouraged the children to resolve their own difficulties, instead of fixing their problems for them. Over the year, Timmy learnt to engage in more of these interactions. For example, he learnt to apply the rule of offering to exchange something if he wanted something that someone else had. While Timmy however, did not typically initiate peer interactions such as affection, helping or play, he was a willing recipient when peers included him in such interactions.

The teachers collectively believed in the importance of building strong community membership, which was reflected in their practices – all reflective of an inclusive philosophy. Staff used naturally occurring situations to facilitate understanding about Timmy's disability as his head teacher explained,



We don't talk about Timmy specifically. The children might ask, 'What's that on Timmy's ear' and we'll say, 'It's a hearing aid that helps Timmy to hear better' (p. 251).

The teacher facilitated the group's understanding of Timmy by sensitively introducing information and materials related to his impairment throughout the total curriculum, for instance, toy glasses for the dolls. Accommodations implemented for Timmy were not viewed as special but potentially helpful for all the children. Adults also promoted the use of specific social skills dependent on the situation when communication between peers was at-risk for success. For example, a teacher might say,

"Use a loud voice when you talk with your friend" or "Look at Timmy when you talk to him" (p. 252).

Erwin and Guintinni's study provides an understanding of how staff created an inclusive culture based on an enabling philosophy of disability, which resulted in Timmy experiencing the same kind of inclusion as his peers. While Timmy did not initiate the same range of interactions, his peers engaged him willingly in the same diverse range as with each other. These experiences were being internalised by Timmy and his initiation of some of these interactions is likely to have contributed to maintaining his inclusion.

Rex (2000) showed the effects of a teacher following an interactionist model of teaching (for the entire class) on the social and academic inclusion of a 16 year old girl (Judy) with learning difficulties. Rex stated that the focus on special needs or individualistic learning usually leads teachers to define their roles as remediating student deficits. However, an alternative philosophy of teaching derived from self-determination theory supports student engagement in genuinely challenging and contextually valid activities, promotes their autonomy in an informational context, facilitates intrinsic motivation, encourages knowledge-enhancing strategies and actually redefines the traditional roles and actions of both teachers and students. The role of the teacher then becomes a sociocultural mediator of learning as she/he facilitates the integration of students' background knowledge and experiences with

the curriculum and instructional procedures. This change in focus requires the class teacher to create different discourse practices in the classroom.

This study focused on the teacher's management of interactions amongst himself, Judy and other classmates and drew upon observational and field-note data gathered over a two-day period with supplemental interview and observational data before and after the larger study.

The class had a roll of 21 students. Five students including Judy were considered learning disabled. There was some suspicion that she may have had an Attention Deficit Disorder. Judy herself reported that she consistently felt sad and had difficulty concentrating on her school work.

A key component of facilitating the students' academic socioliteracy involved teaching all the students the academic practices typically engaged in by the more powerful members of the group (teachers and more capable students). The teacher introduced a structure for class discourse, which helped them construct particular academically socioliterate understandings. This involved learning an academic code for reading school texts, discussing them, writing texts and solving maths problems. An essential aspect of this code was learning to ask a "genuine question" (p. 320) which involved asking about what one believed was useful or important to understand at that moment. For example, when reading or viewing current affairs, asking genuine questions involved relating the experience to one's own experiences and when writing their own research reports, students had to devise a genuine question to guide their investigation.

The second aspect of acquiring socioliterate skills involved students, not only using the code like "genuine questions", but understanding how by doing so this would facilitate their knowledge and literacy. The third aspect of acquiring this class code for learning was that teachers used the discourse as both a means and medium for constructing and reconstructing students' views of their own and their peers' capabilities. They engaged students publicly about their academic work in ways that acknowledged the academic viability of their experiences.

Over time, the students learnt to internalise these three inter-related aspects of classroom socioliteracy. As they did so, they were practising inclusion by mediating social and academic power through voicing, validation and relationship building. Students' understandings and what they valued became an integral part of the curriculum.

In terms of Judy's inclusion, the following segment illustrates how Judy's teacher and classmates in a whole class discussion positioned Judy as a fellow member capable of asking genuine questions. A student volunteered a succinct clearly articulated question to which the teacher replied, "OK." Judy then put up her hand and asked if she could ask a question. The teacher replied "sure" which gave Judy and her classmates the message that she was as entitled to the public space and classmate's attention. Judy then asked her question which was,

O.k. What about the immigrants? If they find you, and like you xxx. If they find you on this side... and... And you're doing something illegal, or something, can you go back? Can they put you like in a... what do they do? Can they put you in our jail? Or what do they do? (p. 324).

The teacher restated what he thought was a key aspect of her question ("If you commit a crime in this country?") Judy then continued to explain what she meant as the class listened and later various members participated sharing their experiences.

The teacher's restatement of the content of her question communicated to Judy that she was in a class that valued her contribution and that she was in a place where she could actively participate academically. Judy's teacher also reinforced the academic merits of her question by asking another student (one known to have considerable knowledge and interest in the issue) about it. The teacher thus constructed an interaction which linked the question Judy sought information about with what another student had academically credible personal information on.

From her experience of being included in the academic content of her classroom, Judy became socially included, resulting in a friendship between Judy and a student who was academically gifted. Prior to the formation of this inclusive class, these 16-year-old girls would have been unlikely to have crossed paths academically or socially as

each would have attended their own segregated classroom on the basis of their ability/disability. The positive aspects of this inclusive class structure involved shared co-teaching and learning roles and relationships in small and whole group activities. Relationships developed through this structure often extended beyond the classroom into other school, family and community contexts. The other theme involved feeling secure that one's knowledge and questions would be taken seriously,

“I've always wanted a class where you could ask just any question, and you could be pretty positive that it would be answered” (p. 328).

This research shows that taking into account the dynamic nature of student, teacher, peers and instructional content interactions influences social and academic inclusion more than any single perceived attribute such as ability or disability.

Kliwer's ethnographic study (1998) of 10 children with DS (3-10 years), identified three categories which reflected how schools positioned children with DS: alien, squatter and citizen. When viewed as aliens, children with DS were considered to be deficient, burdensome and in need of remediation. They attended the same site as their typically developing peers (special class), but experienced limited contact. In their role as squatters, children with DS were still viewed as burdens, but they were included in regular classrooms on the basis of their democratic right to be there. However, the child was still perceived as being defective, having minority status, reduced potential and specialised learning needs different from her/his classmates (the majority). It was only when children with DS were conceptualised as citizens that they actually experienced inclusion as valued citizens amongst their peers and in the class curriculum.

The role assigned to the children with DS who were included (all boys) by their teachers was that of valued, contributing, equal status citizens. The teachers of these children viewed the idiosyncratic behaviour of the boys with DS as a desire to be understood and connected to the experiences and opportunities in the classroom and beyond.

An example of this was evident in 4-year-old Isaac's class when he communicated his passion for Maurice Sendak's book, 'Where the Wild Things are' in a non-conventional manner. When his teacher read the story, Isaac's responses involved loud exclamations, broad and impulsive comments, indecipherable chatter, all of which interrupted 'circle time'. However, instead of viewing these behaviours as evidence of Isaac's deficits, his teacher interpreted them as Isaac's joy in "the drama of life and his desire to connect with his peers" (Kliewer, 1998, p. 76). Isaac's teacher noted that her interpretation of his unconventional response to the story made a strong impact on his peers. They started to participate in his dance and consequently, this made the story more vivid and alive than before. She thus used an initiation by a child with DS as an opportunity to affirm him in front of his peers, to build and strengthen the classroom community and to enhance the learning process.

This process could only occur because the teacher viewed Isaac's behaviour as a valid and valued attempt at sharing his understandings and passion with the group and thereby contribute to the learning process. Furthermore, his teacher's positioning of him as a valuable classroom member, not only in this example but also in similar situations was evident in the way his peers internalised this process. They also recognised his strengths and abilities and were able to enhance their own learning opportunities through Isaac's contributions.

The social outcomes for the children who experienced citizenship involved participation in a wide range of relationships including friendships, which extended beyond the classroom. Nine-year-old Lee's mother reported,

"His social life is unreal. I feel like I am his secretary. His brothers aren't invited to half what he gets invited to" (p. 125).

These activities included after-school play opportunities, birthday parties and sleepovers. That this was due to the classroom context created by his teacher and supported by the infrastructure of the school was evident from the contrast in Lee's experiences in his previous school and on school entry. In both contexts, he was assigned a deviant role and excluded from any meaningful social participation, which resulted in his isolation. This outcome surely expresses both the aims and ideal

outcomes of effective inclusion.

The research reviewed so far illustrates that inclusive education has the potential to facilitate favourable outcomes at all levels of the education system from preschool to secondary. However, while these studies have highlighted some specific teacher/classroom practices affecting those outcomes, there remain further contextual influences. The aim of the next section is to review the literature concerning other salient features influencing favourable/unfavourable outcomes.

### **1.3: Factors influencing Favourable/Unfavourable Outcomes**

#### **1.3.1: Use of Teacher-aides and Inclusion**

A familiar way of supporting children with impairments in the regular classroom is by providing extra classroom support in the form of a para-educator or teacher-aide. Most of the studies involving the use of teacher-aides have indicated however, that their use often precludes children with impairments from belonging as integral members of their classrooms (Slevin, 1995; Philips, 1997; Giangreco, Edelman, Evans Luiselli & MacFarland, 1997; Unok Marks, Schrader & Levine, 1999). In Giangreco et al.'s study involving 16 preschool and primary school 'inclusive' classrooms in 11 different schools, each of which included a student with multiple impairments, the most significant finding was that teacher-aides were constantly in close proximity to the student with impairments. From the observational and interview data from all the adult participants including the 'included' students' parents, eight themes were identified:

1. Teachers did not take ownership of the student with impairments.
2. Teacher-aides separated the student with disability from her/his peers during potentially inclusive situations.
3. Adult dependence: The child with disability regularly sought out the aide instead of being involved with the regular class activities.
4. Teacher-aides constrain peer interaction: Peers feel intimidated by having an adult around when interacting amongst themselves.
5. Less competent instruction: Aides may teach subjects less effectively than a qualified teacher.

6. Loss of personal control: The child with disability is subject to less personal choice/control than her/his peers.
7. Loss of gender identity: For example, boys were taken to a female toilet by a female teacher-aide.
8. Interfering instruction: The aide doing things separately with the child often distracted students without impairments

Ward and Center's (1988) study of primary school-aged children with DS reported that the more teacher-aides took responsibility for the child, the less confident the class teacher felt about including the child in her/his regular class activities. Both Philips' (1997) and Unok Marks et al.'s (1999) studies confirmed the powerful effect teacher-aides had in limiting children's opportunities for inclusion amongst their peers and in valuable learning activities.

An action-based single case study which focused specifically on equality of outcomes for a high school student with a disability (Ethan) in a drama class showed how a teacher-aide could facilitate Ethan's inclusion, but could also hinder the process (Ferguson, Meyer, Jeanchild, Juniper & Zingo, 1992). The key to facilitative inclusion was for the teacher and teacher-aide not only to forget their specific roles as special and regular educator, but also to keep

the students' learning and social outcomes firmly in focus ... in that way Nora (class teacher) and Rick (teacher-aide) related to each other sometimes as collaborators and sometimes in more consultative roles, in the end supporting each other to be a better drama teaching team (p. 226).

### 1.3.2: Teacher Attitudes and Inclusion

While expressed attitudes are not always consistent with behaviour, they can provide some indication of the behaviours which affect the success of inclusion. For example, if a teacher perceives the child's presence to be for social purposes only, then it is likely that the child will be subject to lowered academic expectations, which will affect both social and academic outcomes.

Studies of the attitudes of teachers or trainees who were not involved in inclusive classrooms (for example, Ward, Center & Bochner, 1994; Ward & Le Dean, 1996;

Wishart & Manning, 1996) and media articles (Brown, 1990; Courtney, 1998) indicate that teachers are wary about, reluctant or resistant to including children with impairments, particularly children with intellectual impairments (Tanner, Wilton & Glynn, 1991). Wishart and Manning (1996) found that, out of 231 teacher trainees who had nearly completed their training, only 13% were keen to operate an inclusive classroom. However, some of the reasons for this negativity seemed due to a lack of knowledge rather than a reluctance to include. Ninety-six percent stated that their training had not adequately prepared them and their knowledge base concerning potential levels of educational achievement for children with DS was low. Their negative attitudes seemed to stem from lack of information, rather than from a resistance to the philosophy, thus with appropriate support such attitudes could well be modified.

Several studies show that once teachers actually teach children with impairments, their attitudes can become more favourable as they learn and develop the skills necessary. Clearly, a supportive context for teachers can alter their attitudes which in turn can facilitate their provision of a more inclusive learning environment. For example, a study by Duquette and O'Reilly (1988) found that teachers who were supported by their principals in implementing inclusion (such as by being helped to understand the objectives of inclusion and solve any problems arising), showed considerably more favourable attitudes than those who were not. Similarly, in a study by Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman, Schattman (1993) involving 19 teachers who each taught a primary school or junior high school class that included a child with severe multiple impairments, there was a transformation in attitudes for 17 of them as the year progressed. All those for whom the transformation occurred, agreed that seeing the child as a person and not a disability and developing a personal relationship with her/him was the start in this process. The two teachers who did not change reported that their involvement had been minimal. A facilitative context consisting of specialists who understood, respected and valued the context of regular education, establishing shared goals and having someone whom they could regularly rely on to help problem-solve all helped in the transformation of these teachers' attitudes and consequently, the kinds of experiences these teachers offered their students. York, van der Cook, MacDonald, Heise-Neff & Caughey (1992) who investigated the perspectives of 11 general education and seven special education



teachers obtained similar results prior to, during and after a year of an inclusion programme. Thus, attitudes expressed prior to teachers engaging in inclusion may not be consistent with attitudes afterwards, particularly if they experienced favourable outcomes.

Teachers can also be favourably inclined towards inclusion as a philosophy and towards the child with disability, but not necessarily know what an authentically inclusive classroom might involve. An example of this was evident in Ward and Center's (1988) study in which there was no definition of facilitative inclusion but one particular experience of inclusion was considered 'successful' due to the teacher's strong level of commitment, regardless of outcomes for the class. This suggests that while teacher attitudes can affect inclusion, they are merely one variable. Neither negative or positive attitudes on their own are sufficient to ensure the child experiences facilitative inclusion.

### 1.3.3: Classmates' Attitudes and Inclusion

Peers acquiring and maintaining positive attitudes towards their classmates with impairments has been frequently cited as an important outcome from inclusive education (Cook & Semmel, 1999; Kishi & Meyer, 1994; Lewis, 1995) as well as an essential factor affecting children's inclusion. As with teachers, children's expressed attitudes may not be totally consistent with what they actually do or feel internally, but they can provide information on the likelihood of certain behaviours.

The literature concerning classmates' attitudes towards their peers with impairments presents mixed findings. Some studies have documented that typically developing children express negative (Bryan, 1974; Johnson & Johnson, 1980), indifferent/neutral (Laws, Taylor, Bennie & Buckley, 1996; Nabors, 1997; Nabors & Keyes, 1995) or a mixture of positive, negative and indifferent attitudes (Maras & Brown, 2000; Whitaker, 1994). Whitaker's study of children's attitudes towards students with severe learning difficulties who had transferred to their high school six months earlier found that while around 70% of the students were supportive of the students' presence to the extent that they had varying relationships with individual students, there was

still a significant minority of pupils with quite a negative view of people with learning difficulty in general and some who were quite opposed to the integration project in particular (p. 14).

This group expressed hostility towards the students with impairments, reporting discomfort about being in their presence, not knowing how these students might behave and how they might respond to their unconventional behaviours. A further factor which sustained their negative attitudes was the belief that they would be ridiculed by their peer group if they interacted with these students. This group managed to retain its dominant position and reinforce its stereotypical attitudes by avoiding contact with the students with impairments. They thereby restricted their own opportunities for learning how they might interact more appropriately and experience the consequent benefits from doing so.

Another study showing a similar result for primary school-aged children was reported by Bryan (1974). Results clearly indicated that children classed as 'learning disabled' were rejected and described by their peers as a "group of scared, unhappy, worried, albeit not hyperactive, children who are not desirable as playmates" (p. 32).

Nabors studied the play preferences of preschool children towards their classmates with special needs. A female interviewer asked each of the 27 children in the study to:

- a) describe what a friend and best friend is like,
- b) list three classmates desired as playmates and three classmates not desired as playmates,
- c) list three children they would like at a party and three they would not like at a party,
- d) nominate three children she/he would want to play with and three who she/he would not like to play with on the playground.

Results indicated that for all three contexts (play, party, playground), children with special needs did not receive more negative nominations than might be expected, but they did receive fewer positive nominations for all three contexts. This suggested that the children with special needs were more neglected or ignored rather than outrightly rejected. Apart from aggression as a reason for disliking children with and without

special needs, no other reasons were given. Disability was never stated as a reason for disliking a child with special needs. At the same time, children from one of the four classrooms presented quite different results. In this class, children with special needs did not receive fewer positive nominations or more negative nominations. The authors suggest that this may be associated with the different attitudes and practices of the teachers in this setting.

This suggestion is indeed supported by studies undertaken by Alton-Lee et al. (2000), Ballard and MacDonald (1998), Hendrickson, Shokoohi-Yekta, Hamre-Nietupski and Gable (1996), Kishi and Meyer (1994), York, van der Cook, MacDonald, Heise-Neff and Caughey, (1992), Murray-Seegert (1989) and a case study by a parent, Colleen Brown (1994). Overall, these studies found that the attitudes of peers towards the children with impairments was overwhelmingly more favourable when they experienced a class culture in which teachers actively promoted everyone's inclusion as valued participants.

As an example, Alton-Lee et al. (2000) illustrated how a new entrant teacher deliberately used a variety of inclusive practices to help the children resist the personal tragedy view of disability. Prior to the research, half of the children described an older boy in the school (Zack) primarily in terms of his wheelchair. Following a number of experiences with Zack as a cross-age tutor, an authoritative informant on spina bifida and related issues, a person with shared experiences and a member of a diverse inclusive community, a year later only one child out of the 13 described her first association with Zack in terms of his wheelchair.

Kishi and Meyer's (1994) follow-up study of 183 typically developing high school students who participated in a 'special friends buddy programme' to encourage social play between children with and without impairments six years earlier whilst at primary school, also highlights how favourable contact can lead to sustained positive attitudes. A comparison of a group of same-age children from primary schools that had not included children with impairments and a group of children from the schools providing the 'special friends buddy programme', but who had not participated in it, did not exhibit the favourable attitudes on all measures shown by the participants in the programme. It is noteworthy that while the programme was superficial in the

sense that the children with impairments attended on-site units at the school and there was no infra-structure to promote inclusion across the entire school, the programme did demonstrate the positive effects of a particular kind of contact (non-hierarchical play interactions) on student attitudes, even though it did not have the same effect on behaviour.

In Ballard and MacDonald's study of a primary school that was consistent in enacting its inclusive policy across the different levels (from the chalk face of every classroom to the school's charter), the 9-11 year old children spoke openly about their attitudes towards including all children, the value of inclusion and their valuing of an enabling school environment. For example, one child said that the school was a good place for 'children with special needs because everyone is the same here':

If you need help it is here....we all help each other...it is the same for those who can't speak English, or who can't walk...it is a fantastic school. (p. 88)

Children had also learnt to look beyond the disability and focus on the child's strengths, a pre-requisite for establishing developmentally enhancing relationships as a student commented, "Peter can do things. Peter can beat us at races" (p.89).

Parent, Colleen Brown (1994) cites an example from her son, Travers' educational experiences. For the first time ever during his schooling, Travers had been totally included as an integral member of his intermediate school class. Contrary to previous years, he did not have a teacher-aide attached to him for parts of the day, nor was he withdrawn for various remedial treatments. Travers' total inclusion in this class provided a different experience for at least one student who had previously seen Travers as 'retarded' but now viewed him as an interesting, included class member. Travers' teacher recounted to Travers' mother this student's comment about her son,

At primary school, I thought Travers was retarded. Now I don't know why I thought that – he is such an interesting person (p. 242).

Without favourable direct experiences, children like adults (Stephan & Stephan, 1985) tend to focus on a child's salient differences (Lewis, 1995) and extrapolate, assuming all attributes are affected in a negative manner. In Maras and Brown's

study (2000) 5-11 year old children tended to categorise all aspects of unknown children as impaired when presented with pictures showing an identifiable impairment. Interestingly, the children tended to attribute to children in the disability groups characteristics that would most unlikely be relevant to them. For example, the children with physical impairments were perceived to also have a hearing impairment and to be less competent at school work.

However, Cook and Semmel (1999) found that attitudes towards classmates with impairments varied according to context. In a study of 285 junior school children who participated in inclusive, socioeconomically and ethnically-diverse classrooms, children were presented with a random list of names of the children in their class and asked to mark the classmates they would most like to play or work with. Finally, they were asked to note from the class list who they played with almost every day. Results indicated that children were more likely to want to include a child with an impairment into a play context but less likely to in a school-related task. Cook and Semmel's study involved investigating children's attitudes towards their actual classmates whereas Maras and Brown's study involved children's attitudes towards children with impairments whom they did not know (on photographs). It would appear that the children's actual experiences of the children with impairments led to more realistic assessments of the latter's abilities in different contexts than children ranking unfamiliar children, thus lending support for the view that certain kinds of experiences are likely to be facilitative of favourable attitudes than others.

However, positive attitudes alone will not necessarily mean that children will interact. Roberts and Smith (1999) found that positive attitudes alone did not necessarily mean that children would interact. Their study of 8-12 year-old children's attitudes predicted whether or not they would interact with students with physical impairments in their classrooms. However, if they perceived interacting with the students was "difficult or requiring greater amounts of effort" (p. 46), even if they had positive attitudes, these did not necessarily materialise into interactions.

Gottlieb, Levy and Gottlieb (1986) also found that positive attitudes towards a child with an impairment, did not necessarily correlate with the amount of time children reported playing with or actually played with the child. There may be other

constraints beyond their control, which prevent children from interacting effectively with one another, such as particular classroom or school practices (for example, Philips, 1997) or children's lack of confidence, knowledge or skill concerning how to interact.

Overall, the research on peer attitudes suggests that children may not have favourable attitudes towards their peers with impairments. However, such attitudes are not necessarily static and can be altered where teachers (and optimally all facets of the school organisation) engage in inclusive teaching practices (Alton-Lee et al., 2000; Brown, 1994). Such teaching would include favourable contact between children with and without impairments and ideally an infra-structure to support such teaching (Ballard & MacDonald, 1998), and providing support to students as they attempt to interact constructively. Fear, lack of knowledge about disability and uncertainty about how to respond were identified by students in several studies as interfering with more favourable attitudes and therefore posed as potential barriers to contact with students with impairments (Maras & Brown, 2000, p. 348; Whitaker, 1994). Also identified as affecting attitudes was a lack of knowledge concerning the effects of particular impairments as children overgeneralised a particular impairment such as hearing loss to all facets of the child's life. Such attitudes can interfere with getting to know the person authentically as the focus centres on a false, stereotyped view of the (impaired) child, which interferes with the development of mutually satisfying relationships (Johnson & Johnson, 1980).

Assessment of children's attitudes and the relationship of attitudes to behaviour are complex issues. Many of the studies used sociometric measures, which do not reflect the qualitative aspects of relationships (Cook & Semmel, 1999; Gottlieb, Levy & Gottlieb, 1986). Children may perceive students with impairments as qualitatively different from themselves, so that they hold expectations different from those they hold for their other age-mates. Philips (1997) found that while peers did include the three children with impairments at times, often they treated them as much younger persons or objects. While attitudes may be positive, the behaviours may not be conducive to mutually satisfying and enriching relationships.

#### 1.3.4: Parents and Inclusion

A critical ingredient for successful inclusion involves the parents and teachers' developing an effective partnership.

How disability and inclusion are interpreted is a frequent arena of conflict between parents and school personnel (Brown, 1994; Davern, 1996; Murray, 2000; Slevin, 1995). Not only can this result in difficulties for parents enrolling their children (Booker, 1999; Brown, 1990), but even when there have been no difficulties at enrolment, these differences can expose problems soon afterwards which affect the quality of the child's inclusive education (Grove & Fisher, 1999; Slevin, 1995).

Slevin (1995) described how, despite a principal inviting Lawrence (a boy with multiple impairments) to become a full-time pupil of his local primary school, major issues arose immediately after enrolment about what inclusion meant. The principal interpreted inclusion as involving some withdrawal times for Lawrence and another boy with impairment (Tim) for 'therapeutic activities' with a teacher-aide.

Lawrence's mother understood inclusion to mean being part of the regular class and not being sent to a 'special' swimming and gymnastics programme for two afternoons per week with a teacher-aide and Tim.

Parents often experienced a devaluing of their knowledge concerning their child, her/his rights and the inclusion process, its goals and potential outcomes (Brown, 1994; Courtney, 1998; Skinner, 1991; Slevin, 1995). In absence of schools taking a proactive stance on inclusion, many parents like Colleen Brown feel that they must take the role of advocate for their child. She noted that:

...while [school] attitudes evolve, educational opportunities for the child with special needs trickle through the hourglass of time. Parents and children cannot afford to wait for everyone else [professionals and schools] to catch up.  
(p. 239)

Lake and Billingsley (2000) identified factors which contributed to parent-school conflict concerning the education of children with impairments. Participants were 22 parents (mostly mothers), 16 school personnel and six mediators who were selected from a register of Special Education Appeals over a two-year period. All the parents had asked for mediation to resolve their difficulties. Their children over whom the

disputes centered ranged in ages from 4 to 20 years (mean age 13 years) and the most frequent impairment reported (60.7%) was learning disability. Eight factors giving rise to conflict emerged from interviews with the participants. They were not mutually exclusive, as in any conflict, different factors can heighten or de-escalate or contain the conflict. The first of these factors involved parents and schools holding differing views of the child or her/his needs. The parents saw the child as an individual with unique strengths and abilities while the school personnel described the child from a deficit-model perspective, which parents viewed unfavourably. This issue was at the core of 90% of the participants' difficulties. The second factor was the imbalance of knowledge and power between the parents and school. The parents complained that they could not easily obtain the kind of information they needed about their children or the "rules and regulations" about inclusion. All three groups stated that conflicts could more easily be resolved if all participants had more knowledge. Parents had difficulty with schools being unable to justify their kinds of service delivery or involve them in the planning. Another issue, which caused difficulty for parents, was financial constraints. One parent reported,

A parent should not be made to feel guilty because the child needs services, or that he is costly or more costly than another child in the community (p. 246).

Parents feeling devalued in the parent-school relationship also contributed to the conflict. Conflict increased markedly when parents believed schools devalued their child. Parents tended to view inclusion as a philosophy that encompassed all facets of their child's life during her/his life-span, not only her/his schooling. Parents were therefore disappointed when schools did not value their children and their life goals. These goals reflected parental values so that devaluing the child's goals implied devaluing the family. The seventh factor concerned the frequency of communication, lack of follow-up, and misunderstood and poor timing of communication. Not being heard or listened to escalated any conflict significantly, as did any communication which was perceived as untrue.

The final factor involved trust. Where trust was intact, parents were able to withstand negative events occasionally and feel secure that the school would endeavour to put matters right. Once trust was broken, parents came to expect fewer positive outcomes



from the school, experienced a loss of hope about being able to repair the situation and staff were perceived as uncaring and detrimental to the child's well-being. If trust was maintained, conciliatory attitudes could still be achieved.

Lake and Billingsley concluded that where schools view conflict as a site for growth and change, the result can involve an improved education system for all students, but where the conflict results in all parties being disappointed with the outcomes, the effects have detrimental outcomes on all key participants, including the education of fellow-students.

There are important limitations in research on parental reports of their experiences of inclusion. It may be difficult for parents to report authentically on their child's inclusion when they are unsure if the material will get back to the school and have negative repercussions on their child's education. Second, parents may not know what to look for when assessing their children's inclusion, an issue highlighted in Smith and Barraclough's (1996) study concerning parents and researchers' understandings of quality child care. Parents and researchers' understandings of quality differed substantially. Assessment of inclusion and other educational issues involves a professional body of knowledge not typically possessed by most parents. For instance, in Philips' study a parent said that she fought hard to get the number of teacher-aide hours allocated to her daughter, so she did not want the teacher-aide to work with other children. This parent was clearly unaware that having a teacher-aide 'attached' to an individual for large parts of the day may actually hinder rather than enhance processes facilitative of inclusion and learning. Thirdly, parents are not present for most of the time the child is at school and therefore are unable to access all of the information necessary to make a fully informed assessment of their child's experiences. At the same time, the literature does highlight how inclusive outcomes can be jeopardised when areas of conflict between parents and schools are not satisfactorily resolved.

Summary: The location of educational setting (the regular classroom) is an essential pre-requisite for more favourable social and academic outcomes (Biklen, 1985; 1992, 2000; Kliever, 1998). However, it is insufficient to focus on location alone without taking into account the nature of children's experiences, the content and context of

their learnings, the social processes operating together with the systems influencing these experiences. If learning and overall development require children to be included in social interactions with peers and adults within their zones of proximal development (see Sections 1.5 and 1.6), then inclusion means participation in certain kinds of relationships over others. In this context, interactions that are reciprocal and mutually-valuing are to be encouraged over peer-dominated unilateral relationships. Inclusion within the physical setting of a regular classroom is not a goal in itself. It must involve ongoing, appropriate quality educational experiences with peers if there are to be favourable outcomes for the key participants and society at large.

The studies by Erwin and Guintini (2000), Kliwer (1998) and Rex (2000) clearly illustrate that inclusion as citizens in the microsystem level of the classroom requires a philosophy of disability in which children with impairments are conceptualised as valued, participating and contributing members who share equal status. In turn, teachers' adherence to deficit positions, where children with DS and other impairments are viewed in a stereotypical role and/or as less valuable on the basis that they are less able and have less to contribute to society, results in minimal opportunities for the kinds of interactions conducive to social, academic and other outcomes (Bruni, 1982; Philips, 1997; Schnorr, 1990; Whiting & Young, 1996; Wolfberg et al., 1999).

While providing limited information concerning the nature of the children's experiences, the earlier studies on inclusion did highlight some pertinent issues: Peers did not necessarily exclude their classmates with impairments and the children continued to make as much if not superior progress in the mainstream. Several of the qualitative studies described have focused on how particular processes facilitated or hindered children from experiencing inclusion. Factors hindering inclusion included teacher-aides taking responsibility for the child's learning, children being regularly withdrawn from the class for various therapies, negative teacher and peer attitudes, conflicting parent-school relationships. However, there was also evidence that alternative ways of conceptualising and implementing educational practices were facilitative of inclusion. The common elements in these studies of contexts was that the less effective practices and outcomes were underpinned by a philosophy of disability that focussed on personal limitations. Where contexts were

more enabling and outcomes were favourable, the philosophy of disability underlying the practices focussed on contextual, structural and social issues.

#### **1.4: Transition from Preschool to School**

If inclusive education has the potential to enhance children's lives, and not all experiences of inclusion are equally facilitative or enabling, then entry to a new setting is an opportune time to establish the processes constituting facilitative inclusion. A child's entry to school signals the start of new opportunities and possibilities. If the child did not experience facilitative inclusion at preschool, then the opportunity arises to promote such inclusion at school. Alternatively, if the child experienced inclusion at preschool, then it would seem important that the kinds of processes and systems implemented at preschool are transferred and maintained in the new school setting. Transition is a time when potential difficulties are more likely to become apparent, such as the school's resistance to or acceptance of a family who has a child with an impairment and differences in family and school interpretations of disability and inclusion. At the same time, the perspectives of those already involved with the child and family (early intervention programme and preschool) will also be transparent as they support or attempt to support the family in establishing new links with the child's school. Transitions such as leaving preschool and early intervention to enter school therefore provide an opportunity to study the effects of contexts in a naturalistic setting (Bronfenbrenner's "experiment of nature," 1979, p. 103).

Transitions into the formal education system pose challenges for new entrants, families and schools as each adapts to the new experiences involved. A successful transition is often referred to as one which facilitates the child's adjustment to the extent that she/he feels sufficiently comfortable to participate and experience success in the academic, social and other roles expected of school pupils (Ledger, Smith & Rich, 1998; MacKinven, 1991). The aim then for parents, teachers and associated professionals is to create an optimal context in which the developing child can maximise her/his development and to provide an optimal level of support during her/his introduction and settling into this environment. Cleave, Jowett and Bate (1982) provide a useful analogy for the transition to school process. They liken the

child to a seedling that needs to be transplanted elsewhere. In order for the seedling to be re-established as soon as possible, a careful gardener aims to minimise the shock of the transfer by providing optimal conditions over the period of transition. When the seedling shows signs of thriving in its new environment, the specialised treatment is no longer necessary and hence faded out. In the same vein, when a child moves from the smaller, informal preschool setting to the larger more formal school, in order to maximise her/his development, the transition needs to contain sufficient elements of change to be stimulating and engaging, “but not so drastic as to cause shock” (p. 195), thus inhibiting growth and development. The outcomes of an unsuccessful transition are likely to involve restricted learning opportunities and feelings of anxiety, uncertainty and oppression. The longer the discontinuity between expectations and reality remains, the higher the likelihood of reduced engagement in the processes involved and the level of stress escalating (Lake & Billingsley, 2000).

#### 1.4.1: Review of Transition Literature

##### ***(i) Children and Transition***

A greater focus on the transition to school occurred around the early 1980s with the expansion of early childhood services and a growing recognition of the discontinuity between the informal preschool setting and the more formal school environment (Cleave, Jowett & Bate, 1982; Silvern, 1988). A major New Zealand study (Renwick, 1984) highlighted a number of overtly identifiable differences between the two settings. These included the different philosophies of teaching and learning, different physical settings, differences in availability of adults, different roles expected of children, and different curricula. While the study provided valuable insights into issues posed by school entry from the adult’s points of view, no observational data were provided concerning the children’s experiences of the transition. Another New Zealand study (Peters, 1997) which included observational and interview data highlighted several barriers to the successful transitions of 24 children from three different kindergartens entering a large urban school. These included: inflexible policies such as only one pre-entry visit permitted when parents and children desired more, parents having difficulty locating relevant information about the school and its procedures and the difficulties parents had in communicating with the teacher because of the latter’s heavy work schedule. The observational and interview data from the children revealed that although all the above issues affected them, their more specific

concerns arose mostly after school entry. They revolved around: a) lunchtimes (confusion over the bell, lack of friends and filling in the long period of unsupervised time), b) friends, and c) school work and use of the school toilets (issues related to dirtiness, teasing and difficulty in attracting the teacher's attention in class for permission to go). However, differing kindergarten experiences could favourably affect children's transitions. In one kindergarten, the teachers supported parents by dealing constructively with some of the school barriers imposed. Examples included teachers suggesting assertive ways of requesting more pre-entry visits or encouraging familiarisation with the school during non-school hours.

Berwick-Emms' (1988) study focused specifically on the children's perspectives. She investigated how children used their understandings of functioning in their home environments to make sense of their experiences at school. Using continuous narrative recordings of the sequences of activities in both home and school settings (as well as more formal measures), she recorded the behaviour of 10 children from a variety of socio-economic and ability levels for approximately 30-40 hours each in their homes and for a total of 400 hours in their respective schools. She found that some children had difficulty in achieving at school because they misinterpreted the underlying purposes of the teacher (mostly unspecified) which were vastly different from those they had experienced at home. For example, five-year old Lorelei lacked awareness that at school when the teacher asked her a question she expected a sensible answer. At home 'not replying' or 'moving onto another topic' were the norm. Since Lorelei's view of school expectations differed from those of her teacher's, this meant her understanding of school goals and the paths to attain them also differed from her teachers. Because a great deal of communication is unconscious, Berwick-Emms' results highlight the hidden barriers to learning faced by children who have had minimal experience with school language codes.

If differences between settings have an impact on typically developing children, then their effect on children with DS are likely to be greater given the likely differences they experience in interpreting their environments (Pitcairn & Wishart, 1994; Stratford, 1985). For instance, Berwick-Emms' results have applicability to children with DS who, because of their specific impairments (language, memory, difficulties

with generalisation), may have difficulty participating in some of the implicit school language codes.

While a number of studies have examined the transition of children with impairments to primary school, few have investigated whether the transitions have been successful in terms of specific outcomes for children. Most studies have examined isolated aspects of the transitional process, such as parents' (usually mothers') experiences or concerns (Bentley-Williams & Butterfield, 1996; Hamblin-Wilson & Thurman, 1990; Hanline & Halvorsen, 1989; Johnson, Chandler, Kerns & Fowler, 1986).

Hamblin-Wilson & Thurman (1990) used written questionnaires to ascertain parental satisfaction and involvement with their children's transitions to school. Results indicated that parents were reasonably involved in and satisfied with the transition process. However, the more highly educated parents were most satisfied with the amount of collaboration that occurred. This led to the conclusion that schools may need to do more to empower, support and involve less-educated parents. At the same time, without data on what the schools did or did not do and an understanding of what constitutes a successful transition, it is difficult to ascertain what may be interfering with more satisfying involvement on the part of less-educated parents.

Hanline and Halvorsen (1989) interviewed 12 mothers and four fathers concerning their children's transitions from segregated to integrated schools. While some of these parents had older children (ages ranged from 4 to 12 years) commencing at a regular school, the themes emerging were similar regardless of age group. A major finding was that although all the parents recognised the benefits of inclusion and chose inclusion for their sons/daughters, they resented having to put so much energy into advocating for their children. If parents need to do most of the advocating, this discriminates against those children whose parents are unable or unwilling to do so. It also raises the issue of who and where the support professionals are to implement the child's right to an inclusive education.

Bentley-Williams and Butterfield (1996) interviewed three families regarding their concerns about their child's imminent school entry, their understandings of support systems available to facilitate their child's transition and how society influenced their

attitudes and decision-making about the transition. Results indicated high levels of stress and a lack of information with regard to the support systems available. Like the previous studies, this study focused on aspects of the infrastructure which failed to support inclusion adequately, suggesting that school cultures are not inclusive without a link between what constitutes a successful transition for the child and the infrastructure necessary to support it.

Fowler, Schwartz and Atwater (1991) reviewed the limited number of studies that have examined the transition to preschool and school for children with impairments. They noted that the majority of studies focused only on social-validity measures (parental, teacher and professional reports), and highlighted the need for more data concerning specific processes and procedures that result in greater satisfaction. They also noted the need for finding out what constitutes a successful transition and the need to view transitions more holistically.

#### *(ii) Evaluation of a transition model*

A study by Conn-Powers, Ross-Allen and Holburn (1990) developed and tested a model of facilitating successful school transitions for children with impairments. The model involved three main steps: a) the establishment of a planning team involving parents, preschool and school teachers and professionals, b) the development of goals and the identification of barriers which might hinder their accomplishment, c) written consensus of the planning procedure by all those involved. To facilitate the above processes, guidelines were established to ensure that parents were equal partners in the process, collaborative processes were used, both the preschool and primary school prepared the child for the transition to school, and the services utilised were to support the child in the school setting.

Both parents and professionals rated application of the model in practice highly, suggesting that shared decision-making and reaching group consensus facilitated the process. The other marker of success was that the child remained in the integrated setting throughout the first year.

### *(iii) Studies including observations of children with impairments during transition*

Few studies have observed children with impairments during the transition process. It is only by ascertaining the children's experiences and relating these to the goals of inclusion and the literature on learning in educational settings, that one can determine the appropriate infrastructure necessary to support the process. Adult perceptions of experiences may also be at variance from children's actual experiences. This has certainly been found in other educational studies (for instance, Alton-Lee, Nuthall & Patrick, 1987, 2000; Rietveld, 1991; Smith and Barraclough, 1996) and provides additional support for emphasising the studies that incorporate observational data.

A New Zealand study (Wartmann, 1997) investigated the transition from kindergarten (preschool) to school for nine children with identifiable impairments. Wartmann identified four stages in the transition process: a) selecting a school, b) preparation, which involved the application for teacher-aide hours, pre-entry visits and parents' familiarising themselves with new professionals and school procedures, c) the child's adjustment to school, and d) monitoring the placement.

Generally, transitions were more effective when: i) parents were valued and actively involved at all stages, ii) a transition planning meeting was instigated with all key participants and specific roles and responsibilities were assigned and followed-up, iii) there was sufficient time to undertake the planning and pre-entry visits, iv) the class teachers held a philosophy of inclusion, v) the school was supported by professionals and the school community and vi) there was sufficient flexibility to allow parents and teachers (with professional support) to determine the necessary process for the child concerned.

Overall, the transition to school process was rarely a smooth seamless experience for the child or significant adults involved. Impediments included: rejection at schools, the parents being undervalued, schools having difficulties attracting competent teacher-aides in view of the low pay, minimal funding available for ancillary hours, the complexity of the application process for ancillary hours, which made forward planning difficult, and the schools' implementing discriminatory practices such as asking children to attend only when a teacher-aide was present.



***(iv) Presence of a newcomer: Entering an established group***

If particular kinds of relationships are more conducive than others for enhancing development, it is helpful to focus on how relationships develop when a newcomer joins an existing group (the process at transition to school) and how this process changes when she/he displays some salient differences. While all the children in this study except one were not entirely new to all classroom members as each newcomer knew at least four or five children from their respective preschools, some of the characteristics of these studies may still apply. Previous studies concerning newcomers of all ages entering groups indicate that any newcomer heightens anxieties in existing members (Smith & Bond, 1999). This is because existing group members do not know how the newcomer will respond, and what they need to do to reduce the level of anxiety necessary for smooth interaction and the newcomer's inclusion. The initial anxiety is exacerbated when aspects of the newcomer such as her/his speech, mannerisms, behaviour and appearance suggest differences with which the majority of group members are unfamiliar (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). However, as will be noted later, not all differences are equal in terms of their interfering with the newcomer's inclusion. Some differences (notably intellectual disability) pose more of a threat or difficulty than others. It is likely that such difficulties are exacerbated in a wider social context where an impairment is viewed as odd and a personal deficit as opposed to an expected and societal issue (Taylor, Biklen & Knoll, 1987).

Children learn from their experiences and observations, and learning is enhanced when they observe and participate with a peer(s) they like and value (Smith, 1988). So if newcomers who have had inclusive experiences at preschool participate with some of these same children, who are now at school and are valued playmates of children unfamiliar to the newcomer, then the former preschool group may actually facilitate the newcomer's inclusion in the new setting. Other classmates who have not encountered the newcomer may observe and participate with those who are familiar and thus learn appropriate ways of including. Research by Ladd and Price (1987) would support this view. They found that children who experienced familiar peers from preschool on school entry experienced greater acceptance and less rejection from peers and had more positive attitudes to school than those who did not. However, Ladd and Price's study did not take into account the actual nature of those relationships prior to school. Consequently, one is left wondering whether less

popular children or those who were rejected at preschool experienced the same kinds of outcomes, merely as a result of the change in educational setting. It seems plausible that if favourable relationships at preschool can enhance a child's transition to school, then surely unfavourable relationships also have the potential to hinder the child's inclusion at school. If a newcomer has had a reputation for being "naughty", "aggressive" or "odd" and peers have responded to these characteristics at preschool and continue to do so at school by ignoring, rejecting, treating the child as a much younger member or an object, then children who have not had prior experience with her/him may observe and/or join those who have and also treat the child in the same rejecting manner. For the newcomer her/himself, who has not experienced inclusion at preschool, school entry will inevitably be a more complex process as not only do the new roles related to being a school pupil need to be learnt (for example, performing tasks independently, engaging in teacher-initiated rather than self-selected activities), but also the kinds of behaviours necessary for engaging in the roles required of an integral group member (for example, behaving in a reciprocal manner, developing and/or using more mature social skills).

The processes taking place when newcomers meet existing members have been documented in several studies involving different ages, cultures and other differences including the presence of DS. Berger (1987) described a number of strategies adult members use to reduce the level of uncertainty concerning the stranger. These include observing her/him unobtrusively in a variety of activity settings pertinent to the group, using indirect techniques such as asking more informed others about her/him and asking her/him directly. Preschool children have also been reported to observe others closely before embarking in play with them (McGrew, 1972; Sinson, 1988; Sinson & Wetherick, 1981, 1982). Sinson's (1988) study involved an investigation of reactions from typically developing two-and-one-half to six-year-old white children to: i) another typically developing white child of the same age and sex, ii) an Asian English-speaking child of the same age, sex and gender and iii) a white child with DS of the same age, sex and gender with age-appropriate social and cognitive skills. Sinson found that some differences mattered much less than others in terms of the newcomer's inclusion. While the typically developing white children initially gazed longer when the newcomer was Chinese, were disconcerted by the interactions (in Chinese) between the child and her/his mother and the play involved

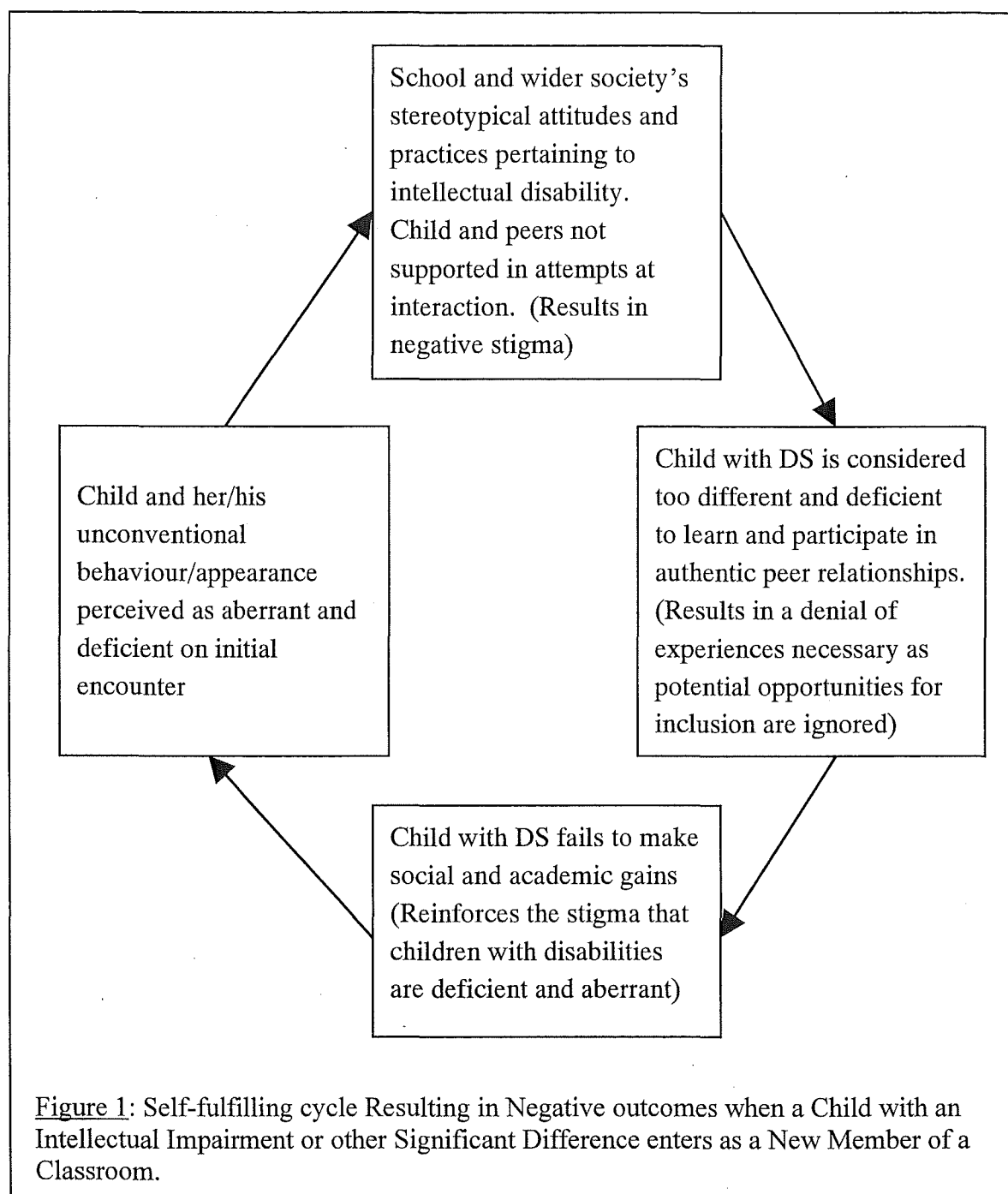
fewer verbal interchanges, the amount and quality of co-operative play was still more similar to that of the white typically developing newcomers than the newcomers with DS. The children did not seem to view the Asian child's difference in skin colour and appearance as much a barrier to co-operative play than they did for the child with DS. When the newcomer had DS, even when she/he had similar cognitive and social abilities, the play was stilted and only a limited amount of co-operative play took place (less than 2 out of a possible 15 minutes). What occurred was that the typically developing children used the initial gazing strategies as they did with the other newcomers (typically developing white and typically developing Chinese), but instead of discarding them and proceeding with play as they did with these groups, they continued gazing in an ongoing and exaggerated way. It seemed that they were trying to establish mutual gaze, a precursor for social interaction and the children with DS failed to reciprocate. At the same time, the children also established regular eye contact with the mother of the newcomer with DS as if they were looking for cues as to how to proceed.

It seemed that the first impressions gained during the initial gazing caused difficulties for the typically developing children and thus hindered more meaningful subsequent interaction. Sinson's studies strongly suggest that there are potential difficulties that arise when such young dyads meet for the first time. If these issues are left unaddressed, they can easily contribute to states of ongoing exclusion as occurred in Sinson and Wetherick's (1981) study in which three youngsters with DS remained isolates in their respective preschools for the two years they were enrolled.

Despite the contributions these early studies by Sinson, and Sinson and Wetherick made alerting readers to the potential difficulties children with and without DS may face when simply placed together, a major limitation of these studies was that they failed to take into account the wider disability context these children and families participated in. Since studies concerning the interaction between preschool siblings and their siblings with DS (Sinson & Wetherick, 1982) and friendships between children with and without DS (Staub, 1994/5) show none of the awkward interactions described in the studies by Sinson and Wetherick, this raises issues concerning the role of contexts in the different studies. Biklen (1985) supports investigating contexts when researching inclusive schooling. He states,

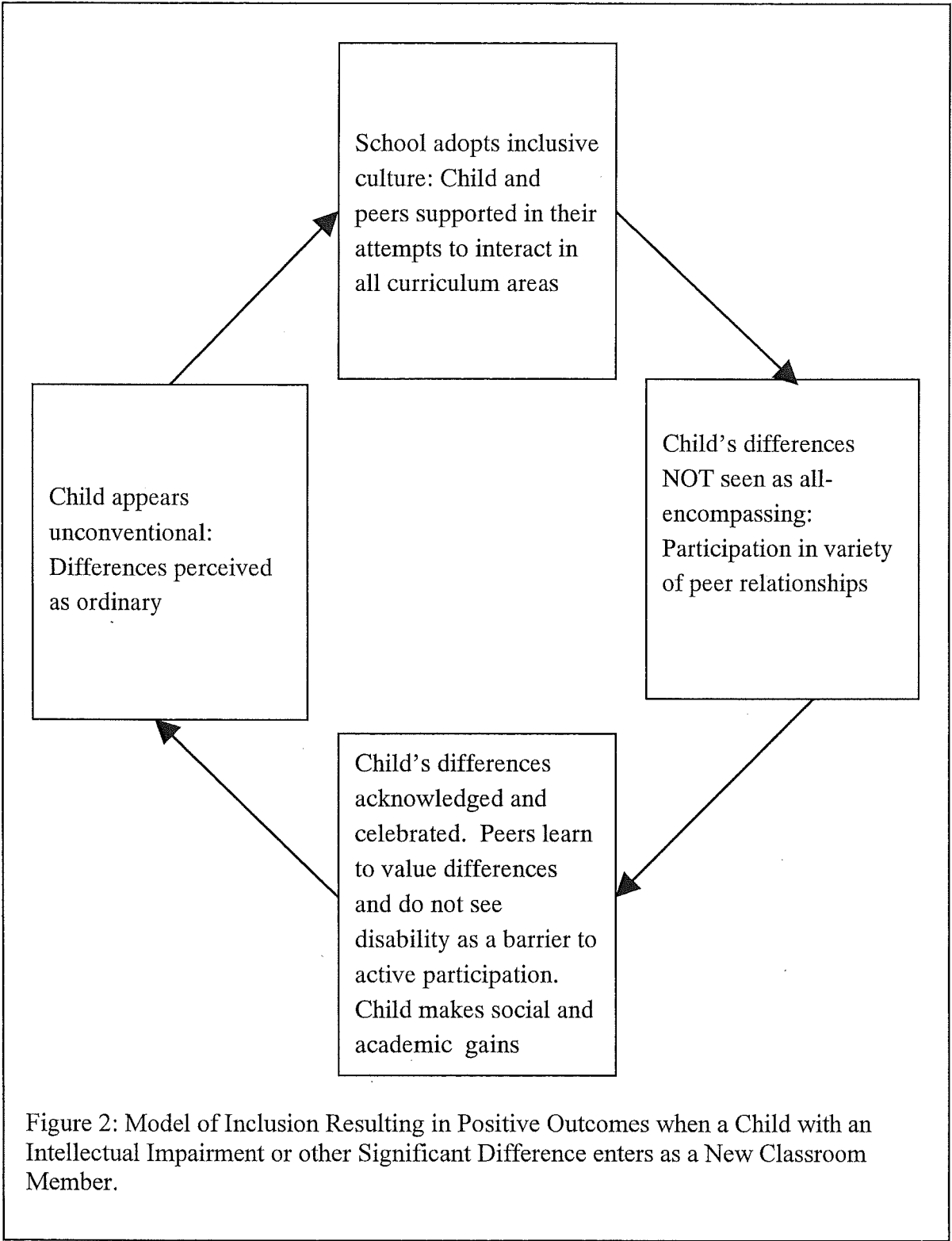
If nondisabled students have not learned how to interact with a student who has a disability, of course it will be difficult; if they do learn these skills, then they will likely display them....In a setting where the formal and informal curriculum included socializing, we observed students who knew how to interact with disabled and nondisabled students. We observed students who knew how to talk about their disabled peers in positive ways. (pp. 67-69)

According to Johnson and Johnson (1980), the context plays a large role in determining the reactions of students to newcomers with identifiable disabilities (not only DS). During the first encounter, the context has either the potential to reinforce the students' initial impressions of the newcomer (she/he is odd, not like us and therefore deficient and unacceptable) or it can provide fertile ground for more favourable attitudes, understandings and possible relationships. The way the process can work resulting in different outcomes is presented in the following two diagrams. Figure 1 illustrates how the process works in a negative self-fulfilling cycle. Initial impressions about the newcomer (for example, immature speech, incompetence at tasks) are evaluated negatively. These negative evaluations are reinforced in the absence of mutually enjoyable shared activities and consequent more mature understandings. When peers focus on the newcomer's real or perceived salient deficits and view these as her/his personal identity, opportunities are restricted for both the newcomer and her/his peers in terms of the development of mutually beneficial supportive relationships and hence access to other important learning situations. When peers view the wider school community also engaging in practices that inadvertently exclude some members (for instance, discouraging participation in a school concert, having a teacher-aide assigned to the newcomer with DS for most of the day), classmates are likely to be subtly reinforced for their initial negative evaluations of the child's differences. The negative stigma peers attach to the newcomer then perpetuates the self-fulfilling cycle. Thus when the newcomer with an impairment or another identifiable difference fails to make the kinds of social and academic gains anticipated, peers are further reinforced for believing that their deficits are the cause as opposed to any limitations in their school and classroom contexts.



Whether the newcomer's arrival (irrespective of impairment) results in a process of inclusion or exclusion is essentially determined by the incoming classroom and school context. Previous studies have indicated that if there is a climate where differences are expected and seen as ordinary, newcomers experience proximity and frequency of contact with their peers and children are helped to facilitate inclusion by adults who

support the children in resolving problems which may arise (Alton-Lee, Rietveld, Klenner, Dalton, Diggins & Town, 2000; Erwin & Guintini, 2000), tasks are structured to promote co-operation and positive inter-dependence (Johnson & Johnson, 1980; Staub, 1998), a positive cycle of inclusion can be established. This is depicted in Figure 2.



Clearly, if the cycle has the potential to take one of two courses with one being considerably more desirable than the other, it is clear that the transition to school has the potential to facilitate the development of, or create ongoing difficulties for children. In particular, this period of time has more profound implications for children with intellectual impairments and those with other salient characteristics (for example, children with aggressive behaviour, speakers of another language) as in the eyes of the existing group, a newcomer's dominant characteristics can obscure all other attributes as was evident in the studies by Sinson (1988) and Sinson and Wetherick (1981, 1982). What seems to occur is that the newcomer's unfamiliar characteristics are interpreted as all-encompassing, thus diverting peers' attention away from the child's actual behaviour on a moment-by-moment basis and from other characteristics which might be present. Consequently, peers start viewing the newcomer's unfamiliar characteristics as static, all-encompassing, monopolistic and stereotyped. Such evaluation inevitably hinders the process of inclusion. Thus, without a supportive classroom and school context which facilitate different kinds of experiences with the newcomer (ones which help children understand the unfamiliar characteristics and see beyond them to other characteristics to which they can relate) in order to ameliorate this cycle, the inevitable result is the newcomer's exclusion from entering the group.

Summary: Many children encounter difficulties on school entry as they experience new settings, curricula, philosophy of teaching and role expectations. There are likely to be a wide range of potential differences in cultural and social backgrounds amongst children with and without DS. The information-processing and learning differences likely to be encountered by children with DS and/or relevant socio-cultural factors, mean that unless these issues are addressed in a supportive, inclusive context, their effects will mitigate against optimal social and academic outcomes.

Studies concerning transitions for children with impairments have largely focused on isolated aspects in retrospect. Some indicated reasonable levels of parental satisfaction, while others highlighted significant shortcomings, particularly in relation to professional advocacy. Transitions generally were more effective when parents' input was valued; they had access to informed information and the class teacher was supportive of inclusion. The processes that take place when a newcomer enters an

existing group, such as in a classroom are strongly influenced by contextual factors. In contexts where differences, notably DS, are viewed as deviant and a personal deficit as opposed to an expected and societal issue, the child with DS is unlikely to experience inclusion as a valued member. In contrast, in a classroom climate that is supportive of differences and co-operative, positive interdependent peer relationships, newcomers, irrespective of impairment, can become integral and valued members.

### **1.5: Theoretical Framework for understanding Inclusion and Transition**

Findings of both inclusion and transition studies suggest that favourable child outcomes are affected by immediate and distal contexts which interact with characteristics of the child. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model provides a useful framework for understanding the interplay among the various processes within and external to the child which influences development. Bronfenbrenner's model has much in common with the social construction model of disability. Both stress the importance of the transactional relationship between the individual and her/his contexts and the impact of social factors and more distal systems on the immediate context.

The success of a child's entry in a new educational setting such as primary school is influenced by multiple factors involving biological and direct and indirect contextual variables, which interact simultaneously (Ceci & Hembrooke, 1995). Inherent in a successful adjustment is becoming a valued, included member of the new classroom and its subgroups. It is within such groups that culturally valued learnings necessary for living in an inclusive society takes place (Vygotsky, 1978). In Bronfenbrenner's ecological model children are viewed as active participants as opposed to passive recipients of their experiences. Development is driven forward by the child "whose basic impulses are directed toward survival, constructive action and psychological growth" (Bronfenbrenner, 1988, p. xi) which interact with features of the child's immediate and distal contexts. Essentially, the model is based on the premise that a child's development involves reciprocal interaction between the child and her/his environment.



The transition to school provides the context for the interplay of the child's immediate and more distal systems. In a successful transition, the child, peers and teacher are engaged in interactions that lead to culturally appropriate and valid outcomes. For such educational processes to occur in the child's microsystem, they need to be accompanied by similar congruent processes involving trust and goal consensus throughout the infrastructure of other systems affecting but not containing the child.

#### 1.5.1: Learning as a Social Process

While historically and perhaps still currently (Alton-Lee, 1998; Ferguson, 1995; Schuler & Perez, 1991) the way of conceptualising children's failure to learn has been to focus on their deficits, there is greater theoretical understanding of viewing learning as a contextualised interactive process involving the child and her/his social and physical environment (Nuthall & Alton-Lee, 1994; Speece & Keogh, 1996). From this perspective, it is helpful to ascertain what kinds of roles the child and her/his peers engage in (how they experience inclusion) as this determines to a large extent their access to culturally-valued tools, skills and knowledge. This is because social processes provide the bases of cognitive functions. Ideally then, children need to become valued members of their new classrooms shortly after they start school, in order for them to benefit optimally from the curriculum and participate in their role as learners of culturally-valued knowledge, skills, and tools.

An important underlying issue is whether children's development is dependent on social inclusion at school. There are at least two different theories that support the essential nature of social inclusion for development in general and cognitive and academic development, in particular. One is based on the position that inclusion provides the necessary context for enhancing development. The other argues that cognitive and academic development is based on the internalisation of social experience and that the quality of intellectual development depends on the quality of social experience and the cultural context. The first position is taken by Maslow (1970) and Kunc (1992) who utilises Maslow's model in his arguments for inclusion. First, they argue that for children to develop higher level functions, they need to participate in safe, supportive environments, ones that are free from threat and in which children's fundamental needs are addressed as a requisite to engagement in higher order learning. Clearly, children cannot learn optimally if they are worried

about what their peers might do to them, if they do not understand what is required of them at school, or if they are anxious about not having a friend to sit and play with at lunchtime. Therefore, being included as a respected and valued classroom member and its variety of subgroups is necessary for children to be able to devote their energies to the learning process. Second, when children are engaged in classroom learning, they are likely to be working at their upper end of their abilities which inevitably involves making errors (Vygotsky, 1978). To engage in such interactions (especially when they are public) involves risk (Bossert, 1979). Children therefore need to feel respected and supported if they are to take those risks and hence, learn from their misunderstandings. If they do not feel included, they may disengage from their role as classroom learners and adopt less desirable roles, such as class clown in order for them to feel successful and hence, included (Connor, 1994; Erickson, 1996).

The second position is taken by the socio-cultural learning theorists (Leont'ev, 1981; Vygotsky, 1981) who argue that children acquire more advanced intellectual tools for enhancing their development as a function of their participation or inclusion in activities with more skilled responsive individuals (peers and adults). Since the core of cognitive activity arises out of social participation with more skilled and responsive others within the child's zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978), being excluded at school either passively or actively will interfere with optimal learning outcomes. Thus, the development of more advanced processes can only occur if she/he is included as a valued member (Simpson & Galbo, 1986; Tharp, 1993). Tharp (1993) explains,

It is through joint productive activity that shared meanings, concepts, motivations, beliefs and expectations are acquired....A basic condition for effective settings is jointedness. Without it, the supervisor cannot assist performance, affect cognitive structure of learners, or be affected by the emerging group intersubjectivity. (pp. 276-277)

Thus, if transitions to school are to positively benefit children, the focus needs to be on meaningful outcomes (for school children, this involves the acquisition of culturally appropriate skills, knowledge and processes) which occur through their participation in meaningful relationships and the establishment and maintenance of processes to sustain those outcomes.

At the same time, this is not to say that the acquisition of more advanced functions cannot take place effectively in other social settings such as the home. Theoretically, it is possible for children to be excluded by their peers at school, yet continue to develop more advanced functions. However, it can be argued that as children's school experiences form a significant part of their total life experiences, it is essential that these experiences are as facilitative of acquiring culturally valued skills, processes and knowledge as they can be. As well as a denial of a child's basic human rights, being excluded from activity settings at school through peer exclusion is a less efficient and effective process than when parents and schools work in partnership, both facilitating the child's learning process. This seems particularly important for children with DS in view of their greater difficulty in generalising skills (Hogg, 1981), an issue which is outlined more fully in the next section. Thus, opportunities for utilising processes and skills in more than one setting clearly enhance the learning process. Theoretically, children can also be excluded by their peers or included by them in inferior ways and acquire advanced intellectual processes and skills, if their teacher and/or other adults provide the scaffolding necessary to extend the child's development. However, this too is a less efficient and effective process than being included by both teacher(s) and peers because, while children may gain access to aspects of the official school curriculum, they are denied access to the unofficial peer culture. It is only through being included in the class' peer culture that children have access to a pool of potential friends. The establishment of friendships is known to enhance one's overall well-being and development (Ladd, 1990). Furthermore, relationships with peers can provide access to normal life experiences and the context for the development of a range of skills and intellectual tools necessary for ongoing community living (Johnson & Johnson, 1980; Staub, 1998) which adults are unable to provide (for example, negotiating use of a favoured toy, using contemporary expressions, learning to assert one's own authority). Adults offer different roles and by their very status, cannot provide the kinds of experiences afforded by age-mates.

Exclusion from peers or inclusion in a way that does not contain the characteristics such as joint activity with shared meanings as listed above by Tharp (1993) cannot lead to the kinds of social goals envisaged (for example, children learning to feel comfortable with diversity, the development of friendships). Furthermore, since access to the peer culture provides real-life experiences conducive to an inclusive life-

style in the community, potentially rich learning experiences, which can enhance existing functions and understandings are inevitably restricted. It is essential then that the transition to school focuses on fostering the kinds of peer relationships which contain the elements described by Tharp and processes to support their maintenance.

It can also be argued that children can gain access to more advanced intellectual functions without actually participating or being included, but through observational learning (Bandura, 1977). However, it is doubtful whether this can be very effective for children with DS as they are less likely to focus on the critical aspects of activities. If their focus is on a peripheral aspect of the task and no-one highlights the critical aspect(s), then development of the underlying functions will not take place. At the same time, while children may acquire some new skills and processes through observation, if they are excluded or experiencing inferior forms of inclusion, they will also be receiving messages that interfere with their overall learning. For example, they may learn that they do not need to think or exert any effort as a benevolent peer will perform the task for them or they may receive the message through their exclusion that they are undesirable group members and that it is safer to avoid social contact to prevent being ridiculed or hurt. Therefore, for optimal development, the main focus needs to be on inclusion as an active, equal participant in relationships within a context of positive goal interdependence and respect.

#### 1.5.2: Conditions for Facilitative Inclusion

The promotion of facilitative inclusion requires certain conditions to be present.

According to Bronfenbrenner,

Learning and development are facilitated by the participation of the developing person in progressively more complex patterns of reciprocal activity with someone with whom that person has developed a strong and enduring emotional attachment and when the balance of power gradually shifts in favour of the developing person. (1979, p. 60)

Clearly, the kinds of interactions that enhance development are ones where there is a balance of power and the developing child is given more control as he/she matures.

Neither the child, classmate nor teacher dominates the relationship, but they act reciprocally as they co-ordinate their actions like in a game of ping-pong.

Bronfenbrenner's conditions for learning have much in common with Vygotsky's (1978) perspective. Vygotsky believes that children learn through shared participation with more skilled others (adults and peers) within their zones of proximal development. He describes the zone of proximal development as:

the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (1978, p. 86)

Essentially, individual learning cannot be isolated from the organisation of the wider learning context as the social environment provides the scaffold enabling more advanced learning. Bronfenbrenner shares this position concerning the context determining the content learnt. For effective classroom learning, rich opportunities with others (classmates and adults) in experiences involving the sharing of materials, socio-cultural, language and cognitive skills in children's zones of proximal development are essential. For the child, these social experiences are mediated through psychological processes involving language, memory, concepts and symbols. Through scaffolding from more skilled peers and adults, the learner is provided with support to accomplish a task she/he is unable to perform independently. Through inclusion into culturally meaningful tasks and activities with others, the learner internalises what is required gradually demonstrating increased competence and independence. According to Vygotsky, this process of development occurs on two levels as he explains, "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first on the social level, and later on the individual level: first between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological)" (1978, p. 57).

The shift from external scaffolding (of particular skills or actions) to the child's internalisation of them can be likened to Bronfenbrenner's view that development occurs when, "the balance of power gradually shifts in favour of the developing person" (1979, p. 60).

Internalisation implies that the child is an active learner in her/his own learning, not a passive recipient of her/his experiences. Using her/his tools and past experiences, the child reinvents her/his own adaptations of them to produce her/his own meanings.

This socio-cultural perspective implies that learning involves a great deal more than i) what teachers attempt to teach and ii) the child being a passive recipient of external stimuli. Both these beliefs have underpinned practices in special education for considerable time through various behavioural techniques such as precision teaching (Matson & McCartney, 1981). Skills acquired in this manner have often failed to generalise to other pertinent settings (Schloss, Schloss, Wood & Kiehl, 1986) and even when successfully acquired and demonstrated, they have often failed to result in any meaningful forms of social inclusion (Sinson & Wetherick, 1981). Therefore, this alternative conceptualisation of learning, which takes into account the bi-directional influences of the child, her/his immediate and more distal contexts and culture, provides a more valid way of viewing learning than understandings provided by linear models involving students as passive recipients of external stimuli. Central to this study is the notion that all learning including that of academic tasks is individually constructed from one's interpersonal relationships. In order for children to acquire more advanced forms of learning, it is therefore imperative that they are included in reciprocal, increasingly affective, balanced relationships with more competent others (peers and adults). In other words, facilitative inclusion is central to higher forms of learning be it of a social, academic or other nature and therefore is a critical goal of a successful transition.

#### Bi-directional influences on learning

If children affect and are affected by their environment, then the likely impact of any identifiable impairment such as DS must be considered.

#### 1.5.3: Down Syndrome and Inclusion

Despite contradictory evidence, many beliefs have been attributed to DS as if they were an objective feature of the condition. For example, children with DS are not necessarily any more musical than other children with or without impairments (Stratford & Ching, 1983). It is now established that many of these beliefs thought to have been objective characteristics of the child merely reflected the societal norms of the time. Nothing about anyone's genetic make-up for instance has ever required certain individuals to be excluded from their local communities, yet this was considered to be 'best practice' in earlier decades (see Appendices to the House of Representatives, 1956; Hunt, 2000).

Schools are unable to create inclusive classrooms and systems if they are unaware how specific performance and physical differences associated with DS (or any other impairment) may affect learning. For this reason, research findings, which appear to have significant practical implications for the learning and functioning of children with DS in schools are presented. It must be noted however, that previous research studies should be treated with caution since many of the details concerning the children's upbringing are either not reported or known to be different from the children in the current study. For example, many children in previous research studies were reared in institutions and/or attended special schools, while the children in the present study have all been reared at home, taken part in a quality early intervention programme (Champion, 1987) and attended their local pre-schools prior to attending their local schools.<sup>1</sup> It is not clear whether the characteristics considered specific to persons with DS described in previous studies are inherent or the product of children's interactions with the environment. A further problem is that many of the studies were not undertaken in the children's familiar settings. Children almost always show more advanced or a greater range of skills in their familiar settings (Ceci & Hembrooke, 1995).

#### ***(i) Specific sensory and learning factors associated with DS***

While the reader is referred to Stratford and Lane (1985) for a more comprehensive account of issues relating to learning and DS, the following factors have a salient impact (based on previous studies) on the teaching-learning process in the classroom and other school contexts.

##### ***(a) Auditory and Visual Issues***

Children with DS are known to have ongoing visual (Millis, 1985) and auditory impairments (Davies, 1988) which if left untreated can cause additional challenges for teaching and learning. Smith (2001) and van Dyke, Lang, Heide and van Duyne (1986) report that approximately 50% of children with DS have visual problems including cataracts, near and far-sightedness, eyes turning out or in (strabismus) and refractive errors. Figures vary for hearing loss. Smith and van Dyke reported up to 40% of children with DS experienced sensory-neural hearing loss or conductive

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<sup>1</sup> One child (Mark) did not attend a local school

hearing loss and other researchers (for example, Balkany, Downs, Jafek & Kraijicek, 1979; Cunningham & McArthur, 1981) reporting higher figures (around 70%).

***(b) Intensity of responses to stimuli***

Children with DS may be less responsive to stimuli than typically developing children. Experimental research by Cicchetti and Ganniban (1990), Chieffetti and Sroufe (1976; 1978) and Ganniban, Wagner and Cicchetti (1990) involving infants with DS indicated that they were less reactive, slower to respond to stimuli and their responses were less intense than typically developing children. For example, children with DS smiled (more slowly) at the same scenario a typically developing child laughed at. Cicchetti & Ganniban (1990) argued that their less intense reactions are unrelated to cognitive factors, but to biological differences.

Studies with neuro-transmitters have pointed towards decreased function of both the parasympathetic and sympathetic branches of the peripheral nervous system and decreases in serotonergic activity, thought to affect consciousness. These biological differences may predispose infants with DS to be more passive or less reactive than other children of their chronological age. (p. 181)

If a lower level of arousal is biological, then it will pose an ongoing issue for children with DS and those interacting with them. Peers may misinterpret luke-warm responses as lack of interest in them or an activity. Teachers may misinterpret a child's low-level, incorrect or non responding as non-compliance or an inability to undertake a particular task when the quality of the stimulation may have been insufficient for the child to respond in the anticipated manner. Children with DS may therefore have difficulty responding in expected ways to instructions, tasks or signals, which lack clarity.

***(c) Motor development and speed of responding***

Observations of gross- and fine-motor development indicate that: children with DS tend to have lower muscle tone, their muscles that flex tend to be weaker than those that extend (Niman-Reed & Sleight, 1988) and both their gross-motor (Cobo-Lewis, Kimbrough Oller, Lynch & Levine, 1996) and fine-motor milestones (Henderson, 1985) are usually delayed. Researchers examining the central nervous system of children with DS have noticed a number of irregularities such as a smaller



cerebellum, reduced cerebral hemispheres and decreased neuronal density. These are likely to reduce the accuracy, speed and consistency of motor responses and indirectly affect the precision, sequencing and timing and production of speech movements (Miller, Leddy, Molo & Sedey, 1995).

Not only is the age at which most motor skills are acquired by children with DS usually delayed, but the skills or movements themselves (even those competently mastered) are usually performed at a slower rate (Frith & Frith, 1974; Henderson, Morris & Frith, 1981, Zekulin, Gibson, Mosley & Brown, 1974). Zekulin et al. (1974) found that, when 6-10-year old children with DS were given two minutes to place pegs in a pegboard, they were slower than either typically developing or children with other intellectual impairments of a similar mental age, particularly during the first minute. Thus tasks requiring responses in quick succession may pose considerable difficulty for children with DS such as rapid switching between pages of a book, moving from text to picture to talking about, then reading the book. Jason Kingsley, an adolescent with DS reported that activities that require quality and speed are carried out more slowly. "Well, when I'm in school, I write slowly and when I write fast my writing comes sloppy and people don't understand my writing....When I'm slow I keep behind...if the bell rings from there, what can I do?" (Kingsley & Levitz, 1994 in Kliever, 1998, p. 66).

No studies have been located which ascertain the speed of children with DS in naturalistic contexts. The data reported in this thesis provide some evidence that the children with DS were slower at performing some skills, but certainly not all skills. For example, Jonathan was a much faster runner than some of his peers and in the context of a game, Ian's running and ball skills were as swift and skilled as those of his peers, although the actual movements were slightly more immature. However, there were classroom tasks in which the children with DS performed competently, but a little slower in relation to their classmates. These generally fell into one of the following categories.

**i) Speech-related:** singing, reciting poetry, finger-plays and reading aloud in a group. It is not known how much the processes inter-relate (for instance, if it takes marginally longer to sing the words, for the activity to make sense, the child is also likely to delay the actions in relation to the speed of the words, irrespective of

whether she/he can actually perform the actions more quickly if he were not singing or saying the words).

**ii) Actions:** pointing to the words during group reading, actions during songs, poems and folk dances, print-tasks, in physical education or music, stopping or 'falling down' when the whistle blows or music stops.

**iii) Task responses:** for example, answering a question, following a request or organising a response such as in playing Snap, recognising a pair, placing one's hand on them and saying "Snap".

Children with DS have been found to be slower to process information and respond (Berger & Cunningham, 1981). Cicchetti and Beeghly (1990) provide an alternative explanation for this delayed responding. They believe children with DS may have greater difficulty "disengaging" from stimuli. However, tasks requiring rapid responding disadvantage children with DS regardless of aetiology.

#### *(d) Attention/focus in tasks: isolated aspects or wholes?*

Children with DS are less likely to take into account the whole of situations before responding. Laboratory studies of infants and young children with DS found that they tended not to scan as widely as typically developing children, often fixating on single or irrelevant aspects of tasks or situations (Kasari, Freeman, Krakow & Kopp, 1982; Miranda & Fantz, 1973; Mundy & Sigman, 1995). Focusing on isolated aspects results in less and often crucial information not being processed. "Individuals with DS may be susceptible to varying degrees to becoming fixated on a single dimension or event in their environment to the exclusion of other less important qualities of the environment" (Cicchetti & Ganniban (1990, p. 194).

Stratford (1985) cites examples of children with DS identifying the pictures of a horse and camel as being the "same" and a donkey and rabbit as the "same." In the first example, he suggests that the participants focused on the four long legs and in the second, on the long ears. Stratford raises the possibility that the participants focused on a single aspect rather than the totality of the pictures. Similar findings occurred in a study of reading involving 7-12-year-olds (Rietveld, 1990). When looking at the kinds of substitutions the children with DS made, it seemed that they were mostly the result of the child's attempt at decoding a single aspect of the word instead of viewing

the whole word before decoding. For example:

Actual word	Substitution
he	here
one	on
big	boy
went	where

In an earlier study (Rietveld, 1983), this pattern of behaviour was observed in 4-year-old children with DS who attended free-play preschools. Their failure to scan prior to selection, attend to irrelevant stimuli and not complete tasks resulted in their participation in a narrow range of activities. The children were taught how to scan the available choices before selection of an activity. This resulted in their participation in a greater range of activities. There was no evidence that the scanning was generalised to other contexts or of how long it was maintained.

Given the evidence that children with DS show varying degrees of inability at directing their attention to all the cues, then ascertaining the salient ones, they are likely to have difficulty with tasks requiring them to make incidental connections. In terms of schooling, it would seem that they are likely to have difficulty when seated near distracting stimuli such as shelves with equipment for purposes other than the immediate task, being placed with groups of children who behave inappropriately and when not given clear instructions to identify the relevant stimulus to the task. Furthermore, a focus on correct task performance as opposed to process-related cues may be counter-productive. For example, if a child has incorrectly counted the number of items on a page and the feedback consists of only the correct answer, rather than processes to facilitate the necessary scanning abilities, such as “Have you looked at the whole page?” then any initial difficulty the child has at using the available information to solve her/his problems may be compounded.

*(e) Visual/auditory complexity*

Overall, studies of infants and children with DS looking at patterns (Anwar, 1983) and listening to auditory stimuli (Glenn & Cunningham, 1983) indicate that they

prefer patterns which are lower in complexity, avoiding speech or visual patterns which increased in complexity. It would seem that children with DS are at-risk from experiencing overload if too much information is presented simultaneously and the links between the new information and the child's understandings are not made explicit. Tasks requiring independent problem-solving when there is limited feedback or cues and reduced or no access to a more capable adult or peer to scaffold more advanced problem-solving may cause problems for children with DS. Being included as a group member is thus a pre-requisite for optimal learning in more developmentally advanced contexts.

#### ***(f) Behavioural inhibition***

Disengaging or delaying responding once already engaged in a task, is more difficult for children with DS than for typically developing peers. In an experimental study by Kopp (1990) children with DS (aged 24-40 months) and typically developing children (aged 18-30 months) who were matched for developmental levels, were presented with an extremely attractive red telephone. The researcher told each child that she had to leave to get some more toys, and not to touch the telephone until she returned. She left and waited for 2 and a half minutes or sooner if the child touched the telephone before the end of that time span. The children with DS were considerably less able to inhibit their touching of the phone (mean delay = 23.3 seconds in comparison to 71.5 seconds) for the typically developing children). What was noteworthy was that the children with DS seemed totally unable to disengage from the stimulus (the telephone) whereas the typically developing children were able to engage in a variety of diversionary strategies such as looking at their hands, around the room or at the ceiling, which facilitated their waiting.

While no experimental evidence exists concerning the performance of older children with DS, data collected for previous research studies in naturalistic contexts (Rietveld, 1983, 1989) suggest that pre- and primary school aged children with DS continue to have difficulties inhibiting their responses. They touched materials before the teacher explained their required use, continued drawing (on their desks) beyond the limits of their paper/book and fiddled with irrelevant materials despite reprimands. Evidence that children with DS have difficulty disengaging once engaged in behaviour comes from several sources. Serafica and Cicchetti (1976) and Cicchetti

and Sroufe (1981) found that infants with DS took much longer to pacify when distressed than typically developing infants. They concluded that these children have deficits in dampening and arousal mechanisms. Landry and Capiieski (1989) found that young children with DS were easier to direct to an activity than redirect from an activity already engaged in.

Wagner, Ganiban and Cicchetti (1990) have suggested a biological explanation for why children with DS are less able to inhibit responses. They claim that “individuals with DS have increased amplitude in cortical evoked potentials, which has led to suggestions that individuals with DS are deficient with respect to the inhibitory capacity of their brains” (p. 163).

An alternative explanation is that children with DS have less well-developed schema for situations or events. When they see equipment or materials in a school situation, they do not understand that the teacher is likely to have a purpose in mind for it that is different from the purpose of the contexts in which they have encountered the materials before. For example crayons, pencils and paper at home and preschool are usually for children to create their own drawing or writing whereas at school, they are usually tools for a particular teacher-specified goal. Alternatively, given their more limited short-term auditory memory, they may forget the instructions quickly. In Kopp’s research, the children with DS may have forgotten that they were not to touch the red telephone.

The evidence shows that children with DS become more fixated and less able to disengage from stimuli. Whether this comes from a basic neurological inhibitory incapacity, deficits in auditory memory, failure to construct an appropriate schema for the situation, other unidentified reasons or a combination of the above is still unclear. Furthermore, the children's own level of interest in tasks, the complexity of tasks, competence levels, and other environmental factors such as reinforcement provided by adults may also affect the child's ability to engage/disengage from activities.

### *(g) Memory*

A number of laboratory studies have consistently demonstrated that children with DS show poorer short-term auditory and visual memory than typically developing

children and children with other forms of developmental delays. However, despite both their auditory and visual memory being weaker in comparison to other groups of children, their visual recall was found to be superior to their auditory recall (McDade & Adler, 1980; Marcell, 1988; Marcell & Armstrong, 1982; Marcell & Weeks, 1988). Typically developing children generally show better auditory than visual memory. Poor auditory memory is likely to have major implications for school performance. Children with DS may forget the task instruction(s) if they are presented orally and there is a delay in the execution of the task due to interfering variables such as finding her/his pencil and/or desk. Any subsequent instructions concerning the processes to be engaged in may also be forgotten if the child does not need the information immediately (for example, a reminder about where to continue printing after completing the first line may not be remembered by the time the child has completed the first line). The impact of short-term memory clearly affects most curriculum areas and particularly in the area of mathematics (for instance, in counting a set, the child has to remember where she/he started, the number of items to be counted, which ones she/he has already counted and that the last number counted is the cardinal number of the set). Given the importance of memory for success at maths, this may help explain why to date children with DS have performed more poorly in this area than literacy-based subjects which are more visual.

Poor short-term memory is also likely to affect acquisition of meanings in conversations and hence social interaction. If others speak to the child in long sentences, the child has to store all the words in short-term memory until he/she has heard the whole sentence, before he/she can decode it for meaning. Retaining the words in short-term memory is a virtually impossible task for the child with DS, so it is hardly surprising if he/she opts out of the interaction or focuses on an aspect of the conversation even if it is an isolated and unimportant aspect. Where teachers and children emphasise key aspects and/or use visual cues (such as pictures or words) when conveying large amounts of information, the child with DS will not have to rely as heavily on his/her short-term auditory memory and can participate more actively in the learning process and relationships with others.

### *(h) Expectations of sense-making experiences?*

Children with DS are less likely to participate in encounters which make sense and may therefore come to expect their experiences not to make sense. For instance, research concerning language interactions between pre-school children with DS and their caregivers (for example, Buckhalt, Rutherford & Goldberg, 1978; Jones, 1977) indicated that there are many overlaps and less synchrony between the child's and caregiver's vocalisations which were not evident in interactions between caregivers and typically developing children of the same chronological or mental ages. Children with DS are thus likely to experience more situations that do not make sense to them. Other characteristics such as difficulty with focussing on the salient aspects of tasks, poor articulation (Farrell & Elkins, 1994/5; Lenneberg, 1962) and difficulty with making incidental connections may also be contributing factors to the child with DS experiencing more situations which do not make sense than typically developing children. Poor articulation can make it difficult for others to understand what the child with DS is saying, with others responding to what they perceive the child said, not what she/he actually said. If a child has many such experiences and does not have the skills to rectify the misunderstandings, she/he may well believe that the world not making sense is the norm and therefore not develop the skills necessary for creating more meaningful experiences. The implications of repeated experiences where the world makes a different kind of sense from that experienced by the majority is likely to affect how these young children with DS perceive the curriculum content. For example, Smith and Elley (1994) in their text on reading in New Zealand state that the typical new entrant learning to read has the expectation that the text makes sense and when it does not, she/he will draw on a number of strategies such as looking at the picture, guessing a word using her/his knowledge of what the words start/end with. However, given that children with DS have probably had a large number of experiences in which their worlds have not made sense (for example, they have been misunderstood or ignored in attempts to communicate), one wonders whether they expect the text (or other experiences) to make sense. Their frequent experiences of lack of congruence between their understanding and intentions and responses from their environment may also contribute to their very low level of error awareness even as they mature (for example in print-related skills, see Rietveld, 1991).

### *(i) Instability of performance*

Several studies have indicated that the performance of children with DS on specific tasks such as object constancy and IQ assessments show greater individual variation in task performance than children with other forms of retardation (Bernheimer & Keogh, 1988) and typically developing children of the same age (Morss, 1983, 1985; Wishart, 1993; Wishart & Duffy, 1990). Morss argues that understanding at one level does not seem to be consolidated and built on to the same extent as a typically developing child. Similar instability was found in research I undertook with older children with DS (Rietveld, 1989). When assessing the rote counting skills of 7-12-year-old children, only 41% counted exactly the same number sequence on both occasions. In another study concerning the reading behaviour of six children with DS (aged 9-13 years), I also found large variations on the two parallel forms of the Neale Analysis of Reading Comprehension Test (Rietveld, 1990). The variations on the two forms in terms of reading ages ranged from 2 months to 11 months with different children performing better or less well on either form, with no easily identifiable pattern. It was clear that all the children used appropriate skills such as looking at the text, asking for clarification at times, but they were just as likely to fail using these skills, even for the easier questions. This issue would have important implications for how teachers assess the competencies of children with DS, as one-off measures are unlikely to give an accurate indication of their actual abilities.

### *(j) 'Opting out' behaviour*

Children with DS are known to avoid tasks that they perceive as challenging. Wishart and Duffy (1990) found that large numbers of infants with DS in their study of object concept tasks "went to considerable lengths to avoid tasks at a level of difficulty one step or above their current developmental status" (pp. 19-20).

However, it is not only challenging tasks that children with DS avoid. Kasari and Freeman (2001) found that in comparison to typically developing children and other children with mental retardation (matched on mental age), 5- to 12-year-old children with DS used distracting and opting out tactics a great deal more when solving both solvable and unsolvable puzzles. The authors stated that habitually relying on social skills and using them inappropriately in problem-solving tasks reduced their task persistence and goal-directed behaviour.



### ***(k) Generalisation/incidental learning***

Children with DS are less likely to generalise concepts, skills and information to new or slightly different materials, situations, tasks or places (Hogg, 1981; Stratford, 1985). This failure would appear to stem from an inability to ascertain the similarities between one's past skills or knowledge of the issue and the current requirements. Skills acquired in one situation or in the presence of particular people are also less likely to transfer to another.

Being able to make the appropriate connections between similarities in tasks, skills and situations is clearly critical for most aspects of school learning. Reading comprehension is dependent on connecting the current text with one's prior knowledge, mathematics requires the application of problem-solving skills to new situations, and how to behave appropriately is often dependent on recognising similarities between the cues in the context and those from previously-experienced similar situations. When communicating through print, a child needs to recognise that error awareness is always an important factor, in order for others to comprehend the meaning, not just a skill one exhibits in the presence of a certain person and not others.

### ***(l) Language development***

The research on language indicates that receptive language and cognition are usually at a more mature level than expressive language. In fact, expressive language is usually the most delayed aspect of development of the child with DS (Cicchetti & Beeghly, 1990; Fowler, Doherty & Boynton, 1995; Rondal, 1988). Syntax development (appropriate sentence structures and grammar) is also more delayed than vocabulary development (Buckley, 1996). The learning of expressive language continues with increasing age, but in relation to chronological age, it is at a slower rate (Miller, Leddy & Leavitt, 1999). It is important therefore that the competence of children with DS and their subsequent participation or lack of participation in educational experiences is not judged on the basis of their expressive language abilities. Understanding of meanings can also be delayed as children with DS focus on sequences of auditory language (words and sounds) as opposed to their underlying

conceptual or semantic aspects.

*(ii) Characteristics applicable to children with DS and other low-achieving children*

*(a) Use of learning strategies*

A number of researchers (for example, Anderson, 1981; Conway & Ashman, 1988; Cullen, 1985) have found that low-achieving children are often highly “on-task” but use a narrow range of low level strategies when undertaking tasks with the consequence that the child fails to perform correctly and learn what was intended. Studies of interviews with high-achieving children concerning their learning strategies indicated their use of a wide range of skills such as the application of study skills, renewal of effort in terms of a specific strategy (Cullen & Carver, 1982), monitoring of their writing processes, deferring revision until near task-completion and a thorough understanding of what the task entailed as well as ways of successfully completing it (Doyle, 1983). Low achievers, in comparison tended to report the use of low-level strategies such as listening to instructions, working hard and asking for non-specific help (Cullen & Carver, 1982). Observations of the latter also indicate that they are less likely to select and process information relevant to the task's requirements, that their schema for tasks are often weak and that they focus on specific details without taking into account the whole. While little research is available on children with DS specifically, what is available suggests that they use the same kinds of strategies as other low-achieving children. For example, Rietveld's studies of children with DS in inclusive settings in 1986 (6-7 year-olds) and 1989 (7-12 year-olds) indicated that the amount of time on-task was only just below the typically developing contrast children studied (1984: Mean amount of time on-task, DS = 80%, Contrast 84%; 1989: Mean amount of time on-task, DS = 86%; Contrast 91%), with individual children with DS actually attending more than their typically developing classmates, although their performance in most curriculum areas was generally at a much lower level. In a study of reading and comprehension skills by 9-12 year-old children with DS (Rietveld, 1990), it was also found that the children not only used lower level strategies to undertake tasks, but when they did demonstrate more mature strategies such as using the text to answer a question, their use of such skills was highly inconsistent. Rietveld's (1991) study concerning the print-related skills of 7-12 year-old children with DS also indicated that they were generally engaged in their tasks, but in comparison to their classmates, they used a minimal

range of very low level strategies to complete their tasks. They seldom identified errors or used strategies to help them succeed such as proof-read their work or compare their work with the model provided.

### *(b) Schema for tasks*

Low-achieving children including children with DS seem to lack adequate schema to assist them in tasks performance. Research studies in reading, for example, suggest that there is a strong relationship between the schemata or understanding of the processes involved and the children's actual competence in reading (Johns & Ellis, 1976; McNeill, 1984). There is no reason to believe that this does not hold true for other tasks. McNeill (1984) states that good readers know that reading should be meaningful, they know why people read and what to do when they do not understand. This was one of the findings in Rietveld's (1990) reading study of six children with DS (aged 9-13 years). The three children who scored the highest on the Burt Word Reading Test and the Neale Analysis of Reading were also the three who showed the most mature understandings of the reading process. Knowledge of what the task entails would appear to be an important requisite to the learning of mature strategies necessary to undertake the task in a competent manner. In fact, without a schema or basic understanding of what the task involves, it seems difficult to envisage how errors could be identified, an ability that appears necessary before the development of mature metacognitive strategies. Evidence from Cullen and Carver's (1982) study would support such a view. In their study of teaching learning strategies to a small group of 10-year-old children, they found that those who gained least from the training were those who lacked basic competence with the content. Consequently, skills such as monitoring and checking were of little value when the content of tasks made little sense.

Summary: An ecological perspective which draws on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model of development is used in this study as a framework for understanding inclusion and the transition to school. Essentially, this model views development as a function of a child's direct experience in her/his immediate contexts which is influenced by interactions occurring in more distal contexts. However, this is not a uni-directional process as children are not passive recipients of their environments. Instead, they influence and are influenced by both immediate and indirect contexts. Focusing on

the interactive nature of inclusion/exclusion also fits in with Becker's (1963) theory of deviance and stigmatisation which views deviancy as an interactive social process as opposed to merely the failure of an individual to adhere to the group's rules. The nature of the interactions between the child, teachers and peers are likely to be affected by how individuals interpret DS and hence respond to the child's differences in appearance, movement, communication and interpreting her/his environment. The differences described in how children with DS function suggest that the chances of success in their classrooms are likely to be greater when teachers adopt theories of teaching, learning and assessment which incorporate diverse ways of being and their interpreting the communicative intent of behaviour instead of labelling it as deficient. Vygotsky's theory of learning and Bronfenbrenner's conditions for learning both view learning as a social process. An essential requisite for learning is children's inclusion with more skilled others within their zones of proximal development. Being included in authentic experiences with more advanced peers and adults who provide support and scaffolding facilitates the use of more advanced processes such as memory, language and the use of symbols all of which are tools facilitative of living in an inclusive society. Therefore, being included within peer groups in valued and meaningful ways is essential if children are to benefit optimally from their educational experiences. If typically developing children are to learn about disability and about including others respectfully, they too need to be engaged in processes within their zones of proximal development which are facilitative of this goal. They will not learn through ignoring their classmates with identifiable differences with whom they feel uncomfortable or by actively excluding them.

### **1.6: General Conclusions and Research Questions**

The placing of children in an inclusive school setting may or may not lead to desirable outcomes for children, families, teachers, parents and the entire school community depending on the nature of their educational experiences. There are more studies depicting unfavourable outcomes than favourable. However, the fact that children with remarkably similar characteristics (described by Meyer, 2001 as "developmental twins") can experience vastly different outcomes provides clues as to the sources of this issue. If the barriers to inclusion lay solely within the child, one could not account for the fact that two children with similar impairments and ages, could

experience either inclusion or exclusion (Bruni, 1982; Kliewer, 1998). The crucial role contexts play in disability is substantiated by studies that focus on specific aspects of the inclusion process as well as on the claims of people with impairments speaking out for themselves. Writers such as Barton and Tomlinson (1984), Fulcher, (1989, 1994, 1995), and Oliver (1990, 1996) have provided the theoretical explanation for why contexts are critical in the lives of people with impairments.

The transition from preschool to school is an opportune time to study the process of inclusion in two different settings. As this marks entry into the formal education system, many aspects of the process are likely to be transparent as preschools, families, schools and in some situations professionals share information and engage in actions to facilitate the child's adjustment and hence, inclusion. There are few empirical studies available on the transition to school. The few available allude to the transition being a potentially stressful time for many children and families. These stresses are likely to be compounded for children with impairments, their families and possibly schools as schools and communities have evolved without the beliefs and expertise necessary for successfully including children and families from minority groups (Ballard, 1991).

Processes such as inclusion and the transition to school can best be understood within a transactional model of development since the child's characteristics and her/his immediate and wider social systems interact constantly with one another.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model and Vygotsky's theory of learning share elements in common with the social construction model of disability. A common feature of all these models is their focus on the child's functioning within her/his immediate contexts and their consideration of the broader social, political, and structural factors impacting on that functioning. These models are therefore helpful in understanding whether the processes occurring during inclusion and the transition are facilitative and supportive of development, which includes being treated as an equal, valued, contributing member of the class and school and all pertinent subgroups. In essence, the child needs to be an active participant in the full range of culturally-valued roles typical of that setting. When learning/development is conceptualised as a function of the quality of interactions with more skilled learners, it becomes evident that i) the child's inclusion with more expert learners is essential for optimal culturally-valued

learning outcomes to occur and ii) given the broader goal of an inclusive society, (of which an inclusive school is a component), classmates need to be included into processes involving the valuing of diversity and the establishment of an inclusive learning community. Children cannot learn to include effectively by avoiding contact. For children to experience inclusion into meaningful culturally-valid learning encounters within their zones of proximal development at the classroom level, an infrastructure needs to be developed that supports these kinds of inclusive experiences within the classroom and school.

While both the inclusion and transition literature have contributed to our understanding of factors impeding and enhancing favourable processes and outcomes, some major shortcomings are also evident. First, studies that do not specify what facilitative inclusion consists of are potentially misleading as researchers ascribe various meanings to the term, some of which result in children actually experiencing exclusion (Farrell, 2001; Philips, 1997). Second, most of the transition studies are of limited value, since they fail to specify desirable outcomes for children. For instance, Wartmann's (1997) two major conclusions focus on the need for adequate funding and shared processes. While not disputing the merits of these two factors, they are insufficient in themselves without an identification of the goal of these processes (presumably the child's inclusion). If it is inclusion, then an operational meaning needs to be established. Parents, teachers and professionals could otherwise be engaged in adequately funded shared processes, without realising that the processes they determine at the classroom level are not developmentally enhancing and therefore incapable of achieving inclusive outcomes. Third, much of the current research has a narrow focus examining particular factors that affect the transition and/or inclusion process without identifying how the different factors interact with one another. Fourth, few studies have examined how classroom contexts affect the inclusion of typically developing children on school entry. Without this knowledge base, it is difficult to ascertain to what extent any exclusion or inclusion of children with impairments is mainly a feature of individual or contextual factors.

Because of the shortcomings in the previous literature, the aim of this study with its focus on DS is to determine the nature of what happens during children's transitions from preschool to a regular primary school. I have aimed to overcome some of the

limitations of the previous studies on transitions and inclusion by:

- 1) attempting to specify what successful or facilitative inclusion might look like in two educational settings (preschool and primary school) in terms of classroom processes and outcomes,
- 2) establishing how children with and without DS experience inclusion/exclusion in two different educational settings, each of which involve two different sets of contexts (such as peers, teachers, pedagogy and professionals) in order to ascertain the role and influence of contexts in inclusion/exclusion, and
- 3) providing a holistic perspective on both immediate and distal factors influencing inclusion in both settings and during transition.

More specifically, I aimed to address the following research questions:

- 1) What is the nature of inclusion? What actually happens when children are enrolled at preschools and the new entrant level of their primary schools, what does it mean and what are the implications for children with DS, their families, schools and significant others?
- 2) What are the experiences of children with DS in the inclusive or exclusive contexts of their respective preschools and schools and how do these experiences compare with those of typically developing children?
- 3) What are the similarities and differences in the experiences of inclusion/exclusion for children with DS in preschool and school settings? What causes these similarities and differences?

## CHAPTER 2: METHOD

### 2.1: Methodology

This study was designed to document the process of the transition to school of three children with DS and two typically developing children. In order to understand that process as a whole, it was essential to investigate not only the direct experiences of all the people involved, but also the meanings they ascribed to those experiences. This necessitated the use of qualitative methods (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Merriam, 1998).

#### 2.1.1: Qualitative Methods

In contrast to quantitative methods, which are concerned with outcomes and products and the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, qualitative methods are concerned with social processes. With its roots in descriptive analysis, qualitative research is essentially an inductive process, where sense is made of the data after they are collected. From the specific situation or case study, the researcher aims to draw general conclusions, whereas the reverse is true when quantitative methods are employed as deductions are made from the general to the specific (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Wiersma, 1995). These basic differences reflect different underlying epistemologies concerning the nature of knowledge, its production, limitations of that knowledge and how research is undertaken. To understand why a qualitative paradigm was adopted for this study, it is helpful to understand the epistemology underlying the traditional quantitative paradigm to ascertain its lack of suitability. Inclusion and transition to school are complex issues and cannot be understood meaningfully if they are compartmentalised into discrete units instead of viewed holistically. Such experiences, like most human activities encompass a multitude of dimensions, including “somatic and emotional knowing” (Heshusius & Ballard, 1996). In contrast, the traditional quantitative model with its roots in positivism assumes that there is a singular, objective rational reality that can be observed, measured and understood. Yet, it is already known that different children experience the same classroom activities in vastly different ways (Alton-Lee Nuthall & Patrick 1987; Nuthall, 2001) and that adults view experiences such as their children’s inclusion differently depending on their roles,



perspectives and understandings (Slevin, 1995; Wilson, 1993). Using a quantitative paradigm would therefore not reflect the multiple perspectives and experiences in a study of this nature. Qualitative methods assume that an objective reality cannot be captured and that “we can know a thing only through its representations” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3). Because a true representation of the phenomena can only ever be approximated, qualitative methods do not advance one methodological practice over another. Instead, researchers “deploy a range of interconnected, interpretive practices, hoping always to get a better understanding of the subject matter” (Denzin & Lincoln, p. 3).

Unlike quantitative research which views the researcher as independent from and not impacting on the research process, qualitative research views the researcher as an integral part of the research process. As noted by Denzin and Lincoln (2000), “any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class and ethnicity” (p. 19). Therefore, it is not possible to undertake objective observations as observations are socially situated in the worlds of- and between- the observer and the observed. The research is thus very context-specific with the researcher and participants both affecting the quality and quantity of data obtained.

It is important in qualitative research for the researcher to minimise her/his impact on the phenomena under investigation by gaining the participants’ trust and encouraging them to share their information. Entering the field with an open mind instead of pursuing pre-conceived hypotheses that determine the subsequent course of the research is also an essential feature of the qualitative paradigm. All material connected with the study is considered data including the researcher’s reactions. Only later as themes and patterns emerge through the process of analysis are decisions made as to which data are more or less relevant to the issue under investigation. In this way, as mentioned before, theory is grounded in the data as they are analysed inductively.

The main feature of qualitative methods is that meaningful explanations of social events require a deep understanding of the experiences, cultures, perspectives and world-views of the participants involved. (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

### 2.1.2: Rationale for use of Qualitative Methods

Since little research on this issue had previously been undertaken, it was impossible to predict prior to data collection and analyses which aspects of the process were critical. Using pre-defined categories would have been unnecessarily restrictive in an investigative study of this nature. Qualitative methods are known to be particularly suited for preliminary, exploratory and descriptive studies (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Marecek, Fine & Kidder, 1997; Patton, 1990).

A further reason why qualitative methods were employed was that like other minority groups such as Maori (Bishop, 1994; Smith, 1990) people with disabilities and their caregivers have become increasingly wary of the educational research concerning them (Oliver, 1992, 1996; Turnbull, Blue-Banning, Behr & Kerns, 1986; Turnbull, Friesen & Ramirez, 1998), given that so often it has been based on monocultural assumptions and deficit or cultural deprivation theories which presuppose that these “minorities need fixing” (Bowd, 1992, p. 20). The professionals or academics undertaking the research have been criticised for imposing their agenda, having no real understanding of the culture and contexts under investigation and having no accountability to the subjects who take part in the research. The result is that many minority groups such as those with disabilities and their families continue to be portrayed in a stereotypically negative and deficient manner. Qualitative methods, with their emphasis on descriptions, participants’ meanings, the investigation of multiple contexts, processes rather than products and the use of inductive data analyses (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) were particularly suitable for this study. A consequence of employing qualitative research methods with its unique set of underlying belief systems (for more details of these, see Bogdan & Biklen, 1995), is there is less difference in status between researcher and participants. In this study, their use enabled more equal, collaborative participation as opposed to hierarchical relationships traditionally participated in by researcher and subjects.

Gaining a holistic perspective on the process of school entry and adjustment was considered an essential feature of this study. Previous studies of transitions concerning children with disabilities (Bentley-Williams & Butterfield, 1996; Hamblin-Wilson & Thurman, 1990; Kemp & Carter, 2000) and children without identifiable disabilities

(Margetts, 1997) have tended to focus on single or isolated variables such as child competencies or parental or teacher attitudes. To gain a more complete picture, data were obtained on all the identifiable systems and contexts affecting the children and their transition. The premise underlying this approach was that “The holistic approach assumes that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts” (Patton, 1987, p. 17).

This premise is particularly pertinent in studies concerning disability. People with impairments and their advocates, such as Clough and Barton (1995), Fulcher (1990, 1995) Kunc (1984); Oliver (1985, 1986, 1992), frequently argue that it is not individual characteristics that disable, but contexts that do not cater adequately for the needs of people with disabilities. Fragmentation, distortion or simplification of reality would be likely to occur if the researcher in this study decided to investigate some contexts and not others, or isolated aspects of contexts such as the teacher’s beliefs about the children without taking into account the children’s experiences - how they are treated by others and included or excluded in the curriculum.

Unlike other studies concerning transitions to school for children with and without disabilities which have focused on a small number of variables without taking into account the context in which they occurred, this study was undertaken in each child and family’s “natural” settings, while the processes of transition were taking place. This enabled a close examination of how all the pertinent variables interacted with each other as the process unfolded.

While the presence of a researcher inevitably impacts on the process in some way, there was no deliberate manipulation of any variables or the introduction of unfamiliar, disruptive or disorienting elements (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; McMillan, 1990). All participants shared the goal that the results would be available to future parents and teachers of children with impairments in order for them to benefit the lives of children with DS and their classmates as they start their school careers. Qualitative methods, in which the emphasis is more on processes as opposed to consequences, wholeness rather than isolated variables, meanings of experiences rather than behavioural statistics and context-bound conclusions, are potentially more suitable for guiding new policies and

making educational decisions than “ ‘scientific’ generalisations that may be of little use at the coal face” (Burns, 1994, p. 12).

### 2.1.3: Case Study Method

The case study method is well suited to this inquiry and qualitative research, given the complexities and specificity of real-life behaviour in context as well as the broad, exploratory nature of the investigation (Wolcott, 1975; Yin, 1994). A case study involves the thorough examination of a particular setting, subject or event and therefore multiple case studies (such as in this investigation) enable detailed comparisons to be made. The aim of the case study is the gathering of in-depth description with considerable attention to detail and context, with a view to developing a theory that could be tested or at least applied at a level of general principles. Case study research works inductively with theory being grounded in the emerging evidence. Given that the inclusion of children with impairments into regular schools is a recent phenomenon on which there is minimal empirical evidence, the case study with its emphasis on “individuals rather than aggregated data” allows “the complexity of the experiences of individuals” to become transparent. (Alton-Lee, 1998). Yin (1994) views the case study as particularly appropriate when the researcher is concerned with underlying processes of the phenomenon under investigation rather than just the phenomenon, and when multiple data sources are used. Since the value of much educational research is of questionable value to practitioners (Nuthall, 1989), teachers and educational professionals may find the case study, with its focus on contextual detail to have greater relevance.

The case study is premised on the belief that reality and truth are not clear-cut. All data are given consideration, but to what extent they are utilised depends on their relevance, trustworthiness or completeness in relation to other evidence. Since case studies “increase both propositional and experiential knowledges” (Stake, 2000, p. 442), the case study narratives provide readers with opportunities to connect with the meanings/text at a fundamental level, which enhances both memory and interest. At the same time, when the reader connects directly with the case study narratives, the process to some extent is similar to having had the actual experience. Since knowledge is socially constructed (Vygotsky, 1978, 1981; Nuthall & Alton-Lee, 1994), and we learn through

social encounters with others directly and/or vicariously, the case study provides an opportunity for this social process to take place. Whether or not the reader will construct knowledge from the case study will depend not only on the detail and presentation of the case study, but also on factors within the reader such as her/his prior understandings and authentic openness to connect with the material. At the same time, generalisation may occur even when unintentional as noted by Stake (2000).

“Generalization (from case studies) can be an unconscious process for both researcher and reader” (p. 442). This is supported by Foster’s (1987) research into the politics of caring. She found that despite her strong stance on de-institutionalisation and community care, during her data gathering with 13 families who sought admission for their sons and daughters to an institution, she empathised with their plight. As noted by Stenhouse (1985), “Generalization and application (of findings) are matters for judgement rather than calculation,... the task of the case study is to produce ordered reports of experience to which judgement can appeal” (p. 49).

#### 2.1.4: Rationale Underlying Case Study Approach

In exploratory studies such as this, ecological validity is better addressed through the use of a small number of case studies that provide accurate, detailed and complete information than through a larger sample where the information about individuals may be fragmented, incomplete and superficial. Where it is important to obtain a complete picture of all the contextual and individual factors that might be involved, only the detailed study of individuals makes this possible. A further strength of using case studies is that they allow interactions between significant features of the focal issue to emerge (Merriam, 1998).

## **2.2: Participants**

The study was designed to describe and contrast the experiences of new entrants to school with DS and matched pairs without an identifiable impairment, the families of those children and significant others involved in each child’s transition.

#### The preliminary case study

Parents of children with disabilities have expressed concern that much research undertaken by professionals is not reflective of their experiences or is of little benefit to

them (Turnbull, Blue-Banning, Behr & Kerns, 1986). In order to ascertain what parents would like to see in a research study concerning children with DS and schooling, two mothers who had experiences enrolling their children with DS (two years earlier) and more recently, a younger typically developing child (aged five years) at their local schools were interviewed.

The two mothers were initially selected because they were known to the researcher through my work with the early intervention programme in which they had participated and because they had considerable contact with other families who had children with DS through their involvement in a local support group specifically for families of children with impairments (Downs and Special Needs Support Group).

These interviews revealed that the transition for one family was considerably more complex for their child with DS than for the younger sibling. There were still many complex issues unresolved two years after school entry. While the transition for the other child with DS was more straightforward, the mother felt that her situation was atypical and cited difficulties faced by several other families (such as rejection from schools, no academic expectations placed on the child, one-to-one teaching away from the classroom without parental consultation and unhelpful professionals who did not value the family's goals). On the basis of the issues raised by these two mothers during these interviews and my prior experiences as an early childhood itinerant preschool teacher, I decided to undertake a brief case study of one child's transition to school. A family whose second child (Richard) with DS was about to start school in October 1991 on his fifth birthday agreed to participate. His school was approached subsequent to this (see Appendix A) and the pertinent staff members were also willing to take part. Richard was observed for two full days during his second week of school, his teacher and principal were interviewed during the same week and his mother was interviewed on four occasions prior to, during and after school entry. Early intervention staff members (speech therapist/co-ordinator for transition to school, developmental therapist and programme co-ordinator) were also interviewed about their experiences as they supported families during their children's transitions to school. All cited various processes that hindered and others that facilitated inclusion at school entry.

The data from the preliminary study showed a high level of interest and need for a larger study investigating the transition to school of children with DS. It enabled me to make decisions about the topic, what to ask, who to involve, and what to observe.

#### Criteria for selection of children with DS

Children who fulfilled the following criteria were selected for involvement in the study:

(a) The child with DS was still attending preschool at the beginning of 1992 and (b) he/she would enter the more formal education system (primary school) at some stage during that year.

Families with children who met these criteria were contacted and the nature of the study was explained. Three families fulfilled the criteria and all expressed willingness to participate. A letter was sent detailing the major aspects of the study (See Appendix B) and a time arranged to discuss the details more fully. The names (pseudonyms to ensure anonymity) of the children were Ian, Mark and Jonathan.

#### Selection of Contrast (Typical) Children

The study was designed to include a contrast child for each of the children with DS who was similar in as many aspects of age, socio-economic status, ethnicity and experience as the child with DS. These children were included because of the dearth of in-depth information available on transitions to school where disability or some other form of difference is not a central issue. The purpose of gathering information on these children was not to make strict comparisons, but to draw on the data in relation to some of the more pertinent processes and findings pertaining to the children with DS.

One child (Jacob) and his family were selected with the help of the head teacher at the kindergarten attended by the first child with DS (Ian). He was chosen because he was similar to Ian in birth order, same number, age and gender of siblings, sex, age, socio-economic status and attendance at the same preschool and school. The major differences were that Jacob did not have DS, he was not of an ethnic minority group, his interests lay in different areas and he did not enter the same classroom initially as Ian. The kindergarten teacher initially approached Jacob's mother and when she expressed

interest, I contacted this family to explain their participation and sent an introductory letter (see Appendix C).

No contrast child participated at Mark's school due to the complexity of the issues surrounding his transition (his rejection from several schools close to the time his school entry would have been compulsory and his eventual type of placement). There were no typically developing children who had similar educational experiences to those of Mark who could have been potential participants.

It was also more difficult finding a contrast child for Jonathan. No other boy was entering the same school from the same kindergarten before the end of the year. Consequently, I approached all the six contributing preschools in the area to locate a boy starting at the same school as Jonathan before the end of the year. Only one (Neil) fitted the criteria. His family was initially approached by his playcentre supervisor and after their expression of interest, I followed-up contact with a more formal letter similar to that for Jacob's family (see Appendix C). They agreed to participate on the condition that observations would not negatively affect Neil's behaviour. Neil differed from Jonathan on birth order, number of siblings and the preschool attended, but he was of the same age, ethnic group and socio-economic status and he attended the same classroom. Since there were no other potential participants, Neil was included.

### Significant Others

A letter was sent to the head teacher, supervisor or principal of each institution outlining the possibility of their involvement in the research (see Appendices D and E). All institutions agreed to participate.

In addition, I interviewed 4-6 children in each of the classrooms about their experiences of and perceptions of the focal child. These children were selected in consultation with the teachers. Selection was based on their likely willingness to participate and that they had some contact with the focal child. The latter criterion was omitted for Mark as he had minimal contact with any of his peers and the contact did not appear to be selective. Children in both his special and integrated classes were interviewed, despite the fact that those in his integrated class had had little direct contact with him. Before interviewing



took place, the classroom teacher sought permission from each of these children's parents and I explained to each child the purpose of my research (to learn about what they think about school). They were also told that they did not have to take part, that I would not be telling their teachers what they said and that they could stop at any stage. I showed them how the tape-recorder worked and if they wanted, they could take charge of the stop and start button, thereby allowing them considerable control of the activity.

Permission was sought from other relevant people during the research process *in situ* after contact with the person in charge of the institution had been made (for example, teacher-aides, itinerant teachers).

### **2.3: Data Collection Procedures**

#### Relationship with Participants

For the purposes of this study, I initially adopted the role of information-gatherer and observer. However, as the study proceeded and families in particular were confronted with issues placing the quality of their children's education at-risk, some involvement did take place at their request, such as the provision of literature on an issue and some discussion over a concern. However, at no stage did I become actively involved in any decision-making confronting the participants or any political action. To the children, I presented myself as someone learning about what children do when they go to school.

My participation fits into Spradley's (1980) third category of levels of participation, which is described by Stainback and Stainback (1989, p. 272) "The researcher maintains a balance between being an insider and being an outsider. Observes and participates in some activities, but not fully in all activities."

Before the first child (Ian) started school, I spent several hours in his classroom on four separate occasions trying out different levels of participation. The decision to participate on the third level was made on the following basis:

- 1) Potentially valuable data that did not occur frequently were not always able to be recorded and hence were 'lost' if I was engaged in tasks with classmates.
- 2) The fourth level of participation that was trialled initially proved too confusing for the children. They interpreted my involvement as an extra pair of hands for a difficult task or an extra adult to talk to or ask for help. They were confused by my switching roles between observer and participant.

### 2.3.1: Description of Data Sources

The data consisted of four main types: a) running record observations, b) semi-structured interviews and c) permanent products such as samples of the child's work, written information about the child in the form of reports, meetings, and plans, d) field notes about the content of phone or other informal conversations with participants or brief observations of participants or those involved with them throughout the course of the study. A more detailed description of the data sources follows.

#### ***(i) Running record observations***

Running records were used in the preschool, early intervention programme, school classroom and surrounding contexts (for example, hall, playground, music room) to collect as much information as possible about what the child did, the language used, the teacher or other adult's behaviour (for example, teacher-aide, parent-helpers, student-teachers), the materials used, the type of activity engaged in, the setting, involvement with peers and peers' reactions to behaviour the child engaged in. Running record recording sheets, which were divided into thirty-second intervals were used to record the data. An example of one and a half minutes of continuous running record data divided into three 30-second intervals is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Example of Continuous Running Record Observation Divided into Three 30-second Intervals

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Child: Richard Context: Library with classmates selecting, then reading a book

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**11.51.00:** The teacher helps Richard select a book on tigers saying to him, “Look, tigers.” Richard says, “Ooh” and ‘reads’ it on the mat where his classmates are. Louise and Deborah select their books and sit directly on either side of Richard looking at their books.

**11.51.30:** Richard continues looking at the pictures in his book. While he’s doing so, Louise says to Deborah, “You can help me look after him (meaning Richard).”

**11.52.00:** Another girl enters and asks, “What is Richard doing?” Louise replies, “We’re here looking after him.” The girl says to Louise, “I know how to look after him.” Deborah - Girl, “He’s not a baby.” Girl - Deborah, “I know.” Richard continues looking at the pictures in his book from left to right, turning the pages one by one while these three girls talk about him. The teacher is issuing books to another group of children.

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There were times when interruptions or breaks occurred during the running record observations (for example, when the teacher introduced me to a visitor in the classroom, or when the child could not be adequately seen). Such breaks were noted and observations recommenced as soon as was practicable. Omissions in the recording of verbatim language also occurred during situations where speech was inaudible, indistinct, too fast to record and in situations, where getting any closer would have affected the participants’ spontaneous activity. These omissions were noted and as much detail as possible about the context was substituted.

Running record observations were also used to record details of any meetings concerning the child. As much information as possible was recorded about such data as the setting, who was present, the purpose of the meeting, the content of issues raised, who raised them, potential solutions and responses to issues.

***(ii) Interviews***

Semi-structured interviews were used to gain participants’ descriptions and interpretations of their experiences concerning the child’s entry to school and their

attitudes and beliefs about the process. The participants determined what were the important issues affecting them and described them in their language and order of importance. I agreed with Mischler (1986) and Cathro (1995) who claimed that meaning is context-specific and jointly constructed by participants and researcher. A pre-determined list of questions would have narrowed the range of possible responses and threatened the collaborative nature of the study. During each interview, I used my discretion concerning the content, sequence and format of questions and the use of the interview schedule questions, depending on the situation, experiences and wishes of each participant. The content areas covered by the interview guide for each participant during the different stages of the research are presented in Appendix M.

Participating as an observer limited my ability to see situations/events through the meanings children ascribed to them. An attempt was made to include children's meanings by interviewing the child being studied and several classmates at the end of the first set of observations (approximately 5 weeks after the focal child's school entry) and at the end of that child's data collection period (approximately 3-5 months after school entry).

Because time available to interview each child's classmates was limited, the interview guide was adhered to more closely during these. If the child seemed relaxed and willing, the questions were asked systematically in the order presented in Tables I and M in Appendix M. For the children with DS, the questions were modified or deleted after discussing them with the child's mother who had a more thorough understanding of which concepts the child had/not acquired and how to gain an intelligible response.

### *(iii) Field Notes*

Field notes were descriptions of and my reactions to events that were less detailed, systematic and continuous than the running record observations. They were made when I was in the setting for some other reason, for instance, interviewing Ian's father when Ian came in excitedly showing and telling me about his drawing and independent printing of his name. As much detail as possible was noted about the incident, who was involved, my reaction, what was said and the context. The following is an example, which occurred as I was leaving Jonathan's home for the last time:

Context: I had been to interview Jonathan's father just before tea and was invited to stay for the evening meal. Afterwards I talked informally with family members. While I was talking with Jonathan's father, his mother was preparing the younger children (including Jonathan) for bed. Some of the other children were starting on the dishes and others went into their rooms to do their homework. I thought it was about time for me to leave, so I started getting my belongings together. Jonathan called out to me from his bedroom where he and David were reading books (separately) in bed. He showed me some of his books (some emergent and pre-readers used at school as well as other books commonly found in preschools and schools) which I looked at and talked about with him. As I was leaving, his parents and I started talking about something at the bedroom door. Jonathan stayed in bed, picked up one of his pre-readers and started reading it aloud to himself very fluently and without any errors. He did not however, point to the words the way the teacher taught the children at school, but this did not seem to interfere with the accuracy of his reading. The book was called, Kittens and contained the following text:

'Up the curtain, behind the door, under the mat, out the window, on the chair, Grandma's kittens are everywhere.'

His mother smiles (seems proud of Jonathan) and comments to me, "I don't think Dianne (his teacher) believes that he can read."

Observer's Comments: While Jonathan's mother had told me and shown me books that he could read at home, I had no idea he could read this well. I had seen him read sight words in isolation at home, including some of the words, which were in the above text, but never a text passage. At school however, he has shown little evidence of such reading ability. This would suggest that there are factors operating in the school environment which interfere with Jonathan displaying his knowledge and consequently making further gains in this area.

#### ***(iv) Permanent Records***

##### ***(a) Early Intervention reports***

These were detailed reports of approximately 16 pages long concerning each child with DS, the skills he had acquired and was currently acquiring, general information regarding the nature of the early intervention programme, the implications of DS and issues relating to each particular child for school inclusion. The report, which contained information compiled by parents and therapists, was written by each therapist involved with the child and family. The reports covered the following areas:

1. cognitive and fine-motor skills (developmental therapist)
2. speech and language (speech therapist)
3. gross-motor and self-help (physiotherapist)
4. computer experience, programmes used and child's competence
5. functioning in all areas at kindergarten such as social interaction, use of equipment, and perseverance at tasks (itinerant preschool teacher).

Parents were given a copy of their child's reports before they were distributed to the appropriate school prior to the child's entry and also to the relevant professionals who would become more involved with the child at this point (for example, the local speech therapist, psychologist, itinerant mainstream support teacher).

***(b) Copy of IEP and notes on other transition meetings (children with DS)***

The individualised education plan (IEP) was the official document specifying objectives and goals for the child with DS for a specified period. This document was jointly compiled by all key participants involved in the transition (school, special education services, parents, preschool and early intervention personnel). The chairperson nominated at the meeting recorded the proceedings and distributed a copy to those involved. I also undertook observations of the processes involved. Given the time-frame of the study and the infrequent occurrence of IEP meetings, only one IEP meeting was observed for Mark and Jonathan. There were no such official meetings for Ian, as his teacher and teacher-aide set up a weekly meeting with Ian's parents (and relevant others) to set goals and objectives. A preliminary transition to school meeting to arrange handling of the transition also took place prior to school entry for Ian and Jonathan respectively.

***(c) School information booklet***

This was a small stapled booklet of approximately 20 pages which provided information to families of new pupils about the school and aspects concerning it such as school philosophy and policy, general routines, staffing, hours, expectations concerning absences, discussing any concerns, uniform, lunches, homework and parental participation.

*(d) Parent's written statement concerning expectations for child*

*(Jonathan only)*

This was a one-page statement (see Appendix K) compiled by Jonathan's parents as their starting point for revising Jonathan's IEP which they felt was an unsatisfactory document. The statement summarised their hopes for Jonathan, their philosophy of inclusion and expectations of the school (for example, involving parents as equal partners, reiterating the responsibilities of the teacher and teacher-aide). Appendix L consists of another similar statement also drawn up by Jonathan's parents, which asked the school staff to accept and sign the premises on which Jonathan's education would be based.

Amount, Type and Timing of Data collected

A general timetable for collection of each source of data is presented in Table 3. More specific details concerning data sources and their location for each child are presented in the Appendices.

The general pattern of data collection was to interview both child's parents (separately) approximately a month before the child's starting date at school and again, approximately four months after the child had been at school. An additional interview with the child's primary caregiver (mother) took place a fortnight after the first day at school. My aim was to gather the preschool data as close as possible to the time of school entry, observe the child every day for the first week, for shorter times up to six weeks afterwards and approximately four months later. While this was the general plan, the timing with this and all the other data sources had to be flexible to accommodate the differing circumstances of surrounding individuals and their contexts. For instance, Neil could only be observed twice at preschool because he was on a family holiday close to his starting date. Furthermore, since this study was an exploratory one, it was essential that the data collection procedures were flexible enough to allow further data collection when situations seemed to warrant it. There were more interviews with Mark and Jonathan's mothers because they had either particularly unsatisfactory experiences before finding an accepting school or not long after school entry. These kinds of data needed to be gathered when available to enhance the quality of the study. Following-up children precisely four months later was

virtually impossible due to holidays intervening, children or teacher's ill-health, my own commitments with other children in the study or other visitors in the classroom. Therefore, some flexibility had to occur with the follow-up times, which ranged from three to five months after the child's entry.

The decision about what constituted school entry or the transition was made arbitrarily. A month was decided upon to give the child a reasonable opportunity to become familiar with the school environment and develop a friend or group of friends. However, in comparison to the other data collection points (last week of preschool and last week of term), the school entry period covered a greater length of time to enable children to encounter fluctuations in their experiences of inclusion and exclusion.

#### Researcher/Teacher Relationship

It was important that the teachers and teacher-aides were an integral part of the information-gathering journey with me concerning 'their children's transitions to school and that neither they, nor others involved in the classroom (for instance, parents, student teachers) felt threatened by my presence. It was important to me that there was reciprocity in the relationship between the teachers involved and myself and in an effort to achieve this, I adopted the following procedures:

Most of the time was spent observing, but occasionally I: a) shared humorous events with teachers, b) explained my role to parent-helpers, students, c) helped with the setting-up of activities before school, d) briefly discussed aspects of personal lives, e) regularly checked with each teacher and teacher-aide, the impact of my presence in the classroom, f) ensured my visits and their length suited the teachers, g) listened attentively to, acknowledged and recorded children's comments made directly to me but did not generally engage in any ongoing dialogue, and h) provided materials beneficial for the classroom as a whole (for instance, food for an insect, collage materials).

With the parents' permission and if requested, observations in the preschool and school were made available to the teachers, but always with a written and verbal summary concerning viewing the data in context. In reality, observational data were only requested on two occasions and they concerned specific events.



I always abandoned my role as an observer when an emergency arose and there was no other adult present such as when a child fell over in the playground and was clearly hurt and distressed. I did not intervene in incidents where children may have experienced emotional abuse by peers except in instances where a child showed considerable distress and no other teacher was present. Whenever there was a disruption to observation, the running record observations were resumed as soon as I was satisfied that the child(ren) were physically safe or that the issue of concern was satisfactorily dealt with.

## **2.4: Characteristics of Participants and Settings**

### 2.4.1: Children with DS and their Contexts

Ian: Ian who had DS, was the elder of two children and started school a month after his fifth birthday. Ian had acquired a range of skills in all areas of development. For example, he: was nearly independent in dressing and undressing, had a sight vocabulary of 45 words, could count up to 20 objects, could initiate and terminate verbal interactions with peers and adults, and could catch, kick and bat a ball to a peer with great strength and accuracy. Ian's health was excellent and apart from a vision defect that was corrected by wearing glasses, no other physical abnormalities were present.

Ian's favourite activities included ball games, bike-riding, watching the children's programmes and ball sports on television, reading and looking at books and most cognitive activities such as matching cards, mathematics games and printing.

Ian's Family: Ian lived with his parents and younger sister in an upper socio-economic suburb. Both parents were strongly committed to the philosophy underlying the programme (facilitating the child's development proactively, inclusion, parents as equal participants on the team) and they carried out the goals and activities they set in conjunction with the team carefully and conscientiously. A high emphasis was placed on ensuring that their son's development did not fall significantly behind that of his same-age typical peers. Ian's parents wanted an inclusive education for their son with a view to his living independently or semi-independently as an adult. They were highly conversant with disability-related issues and were very involved in the Downs and Special Needs Support Group at both participant and committee level. Both parents

were members of an ethnic minority group, had tertiary level qualifications and had traveled with the children both in New Zealand and overseas.

Ian's birthday came at the beginning of a new school year. His parents decided to enrol Ian slightly after his fifth birthday, because: 1) it gave the teacher the opportunity to establish her class, 2) it gave Ian and his mother the chance to make pre-entry visits in the classroom he would actually participate in, 3) the teacher-aide was not appointed until the new year, so it gave her an opportunity to observe, be with the class and establish her role, 4) it allowed the transfer of relevant information about Ian without the process being rushed.

Ian's School and Principal: This suburban school had a roll of 278 children from J1 to std 4 with 10.8 teaching staff including a non-teaching principal. The children who almost all wore a uniform came from predominantly white middle-upper class families. The school was well-equipped with a large library, hall, computers and sports equipment. The principal and teacher were new to the concept of including a child with an intellectual impairment into their school, but were supportive, willing and eager to ensure the experience was a positive one. The school did not have a written policy on educating children with disabilities, but did have an inclusive statement in the handbook issued to parents:

“Merryweather (pseudonym) School, where all children are encouraged to reach their full potential through a wide range of learning experiences.”

The principal was very supportive of inclusion in the same way as Ian's parents conceptualised 'Inclusion.' Ian's mother reported,

“He (the principal) said that if he had a child with DS, he would want him to go to a normal school too.”

Ian's Class, Teacher and Teacher aide: The class initially consisted of 16 new entrants, a female teacher with 25 years experience teaching (including Reading Recovery training) and a teacher-aide who was an experienced retired teacher, also with Reading Recovery experience. The teacher-aide was officially present for 15 hours a week, but spent considerably more time in the classroom. Ian's teacher and teacher-aide worked together

as a team. Ian was not “shadowed” or withdrawn, but included as an integral member of a small group of children during academic activities and the classroom as a whole for other activities. The teacher and teacher-aide placed his desk amongst a group of boys and girls whom they viewed as socially competent and having similar interests to Ian, in the hope that this would facilitate his inclusion.

After four months, there were 22 children in the class. Some of Ian’s initial classmates had moved up into the next class and others from Room one had moved into this classroom. The teacher and teacher-aide ensured that some of the children in Ian’s reading and mathematics groups as well as his closest friends remained in Ian’s classroom in order to minimise disruptions to his learning.

Mark: Mark who had DS was the second child in a family of four children. He started school on his sixth birthday. Due to negative experiences at his parent’s first choice of regular schools and their rejection by the management committee of the special unit at the school of their second choice, Mark’s parents finally opted to enrol their son in a special class at a non-local school where he and his family were warmly welcomed. At this school, he spent the latter half of every morning and most afternoons in the small special class, morning intervals, lunchtimes and the first hour of the morning (news-time and developmental<sup>1</sup>) with typically developing children. Half an hour each morning was spent with the senior special class as the two classes combined for a story, a follow-up activity and some physical education.

Three months before school entry, Mark underwent major heart surgery. Kindergarten attendance was thus terminated and consequently, no kindergarten observations were carried out. Apart from this period of illness, Mark’s health was good. No other physical abnormalities were present besides the wearing of orthotic boots to support his feet, which were extremely pronated. While Mark acquired a number of school-related skills, his motivation, compliance and perseverance at tasks were easily disturbed. This in turn affected refinement of his skills as well as peer’s eagerness to be involved with him.

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<sup>1</sup> Developmental consisted of the self-selection of experiential activities conducive to the acquisition and extension of (pre) mathematical, scientific, cognitive, language, self-help and social development.

Mark attended Sunday School at his family's church. His parents stated that among his favourite activities were playing on the trampoline, jungle gym, in the sandpit and with his small cars.

Mark's Family: Mark lived with his mother, step-father and three siblings in a middle class suburb. Mark's parents were very committed to attending the early intervention programme and valued the support and guidance given. However, at times their personal issues and conflicting beliefs about child rearing interfered with their attaining certain goals for Mark such as managing his anti-social behaviour.

Both parents strongly desired a normalised lifestyle for Mark including participation in an inclusive classroom, although extended family were less supportive of their opting for an inclusive education. Mark's parents lost considerable confidence and were very hurt and disappointed when Mark was rejected by his potential teacher at their preferred choice of regular school. Consequently, they changed their outlook and decided that Mark's skills particularly in the areas of speech and language and compliance were insufficient to allow inclusion in a regular school classroom. They then approached another nearby school with a special unit, but were also rejected there which undermined their confidence and their beliefs in Mark's abilities even further. Since most children with DS are included in regular classrooms, the unit's management committee argued that there must be something severely wrong with Mark for his family to enrol him in a unit. The unit did not want children perceived to be severely disabled. Mark's family were relieved to be warmly welcomed at the third school they approached, but regularly expressed sadness about choosing the option of a non-local school with Mark attending a special class with only periods of 'mainstreaming' for non-academic activities.

Mark's School and Principal: The school Mark attended was in a lower-middle class area that had a roll of 210 pupils ranging from new entrants to Year 6. The school had a physical disabilities resource centre catering for 23 pupils with physical disabilities from new entrants to Form two and two attached units for children with intellectual disabilities (junior and senior) with approximately six children in each. The school aimed to mainstream as many children as possible throughout the day. There was a

school uniform but about half the children did not wear it.

The principal of this school was a non-teaching male. He supported the concept of educational choices for parents of children with disabilities, these choices ranging from segregated schools, segregated classrooms in regular schools to full-time inclusion. Consequently, the school did not alter its contexts to accommodate children with disabilities, but located the responsibility on the child to progress in order to move to a more inclusive setting.

Mark's Classes, Teachers and Teacher aide: Mark attended the junior attached unit, which was a class of six children (five boys and one girl) ranging in ages from 6 to 9 years. The unit was located in a building comprising several regular classrooms of similar-aged children. A few of the children from the regular classes came into this unit for individual tuition between 11 a.m. and midday each day. The curriculum in this classroom involved less academic work such as printing, reading, mathematics instruction and also less group work than the regular classes observed. There was more one-to-one instruction and an emphasis on independence skills such as using a telephone, dressing and undressing, cooking and leisure skills. The children did not have a specific desk or table assigned to them as is typical in regular classes. Instead, they used any vacant desk or one assigned to them for an activity by the teacher or teacher-aide. The classroom teacher (female) had been teaching for 30 years and her background was in special education. Her top priority was developing the children's social and independence skills. "I don't get uptight about not teaching academic skills...."

Mark's teacher worked as an itinerant resource teacher between the hours of 9 a.m. and 10.30 a.m. each day for children with special needs in other local schools. During this time, Mark spent approximately half an hour each in the following contexts:

(a) the classroom next door with same-age peers for 'News.' Mark's classmates and some children from the physically disabled section also participated in this 'News' session, which resulted in about 40 children in the class. The female teacher of this class was an experienced teacher with a postgraduate qualification in education. She was willing to have the children with special needs participate in her class, but she did not

see their learning as her responsibility. She commented to me about the children from the attached unit who attend her class for parts of the day,

“I don’t really know (how old the children in Mark’s classroom are). They’re not my responsibility.” (Day 4)

(b) the junior part of the school which was housed in the physically disabled section. The entire junior section of the school came together for half an hour to participate in a developmental period. Children were free to select from four or five activities available in different classrooms. A teacher supervised each activity and teacher-aides attended to the various children with special needs (from Mark’s attached unit and the physically disabled section).

(c) the senior attached unit in the senior part of the school for a group story and related activity followed by some physical activities. The teacher in this class was a regular primary school teacher who had completed a one-year course in special needs at a College of Education. About 10 children were present during this time, most of the senior and junior unit children.

Two teacher-aides were employed in Mark’s classroom for 20 hours a week for two specific children, but in practice, they worked with others including Mark besides the two target children. There was always at least one teacher-aide in the classroom besides the class teacher and at times, the two teacher-aides were present simultaneously. In liaison with Mark’s teacher, they undertook as much of Mark’s teaching as his teacher. Mark also had a teacher-aide assigned to him for half an hour a day to facilitate his participation during the developmental session in the junior part of the school. The teacher-aides who were all female were not trained teachers, but they had attended some seminars and courses on children with special needs.

A music therapist worked with Mark and his classmates individually in the music room once a week and another teacher-aide came into the classroom several times a week to work with Mark and his classmates individually on the computer.

Jonathan: Jonathan, a boy with DS was the last and ninth child in his family. He was adopted at two months of age by a family already involved with the early intervention

programme through one of their other children, David.

Jonathan had acquired a vast range of skills on school entry. He could read 20 sight words, could match numeral to set for up to five objects, could print his name with minimal help, dress and undress himself almost independently, initiate and sustain verbal interactions with peers, follow two-object, two-action adult instructions and he had competent physical skills (climbing, running and ball skills). Jonathan's health was excellent and he had no physical abnormalities.

Jonathan's preferred activities included playing with his small cars and plastic road map, listening to tapes and singing and performing the actions, playing the electronic keyboard and outdoor pursuits, such as riding his bike and playing football with other family members.

Jonathan started at the same local school as his older brother with DS at the beginning of the third term. His fifth birthday was in the school holidays. According to his parents, he was well aware that turning five meant going to school as he had observed children at the early intervention programme and kindergarten celebrate their fifth birthday and move on to school. His mother reported,

“He's (Jonathan) got a very strong identity of turning five and going to school.”

Jonathan's Family: Jonathan's parents were in their late 40s. Four of their children had left home, but they were still closely involved through gatherings and informal visits with their spouses and young children. Five children including Jonathan were living at home at the time of his transition to school. They resided in a middle-upper class area.

Jonathan's family included two children with impairments and so his parents had been involved with the early intervention programme, which they were strongly committed to, for a total of nine years. They were also on the committee of the Downs and Special Needs Support Group and actively participated in the group's educational and social activities. They wanted an inclusive education for their son and were very familiar with issues concerning disabling contexts in the role of disability. Experiences with their

other child with an impairment (who during the year had been excluded from full participation and learning in his classroom due to his teacher's beliefs about the impairment) caused them to play an extensive advocacy role in an attempt to resolve this issue.

Jonathan's School and Principal: This suburban school had a roll of 311 children from new entrants to Form two, with 12 teaching staff, including a male non-teaching principal. The school had an attached satellite class from a special school comprising nine children with intellectual disabilities and their teacher. A considerable portion of children attending the school were from Asian backgrounds where English was not their first language. The school believed in principle in including children with disabilities into regular classrooms and this was noted in their school charter. When Jonathan started school, there were another three children with DS included in regular classrooms. Another child with DS had been included for her first few years of school, but then transferred to the satellite unit as the principal noted, "She couldn't keep up physically with her peers."

The principal believed in supporting whatever educational choices parents made for their children, whether it be full-time inclusion or in a satellite class. At the same time, he believed that if the school could not cope with a child in the mainstream, the parents would be asked to make an alternative decision such as agree to placement in a satellite class. He apparently perceived disability as the child's problem, not the problem of the school context.

Jonathan's Class, Teacher and Teacher aide: Jonathan was the sixth boy and seventeenth child to enter this classroom. At the time he entered, most of the children had been at school since the beginning of the year and many were quite advanced in literacy skills. By the time the follow-up data were collected (three months after school entry), there were 28 children in the class. Several of the boys in this classroom engaged in challenging behaviours, including one who arrived from the Middle East several weeks after Jonathan's entry. He spoke little English and along with Jonathan, the teacher reported that she found these boys' behaviours particularly difficult. Jonathan's desk was the next vacant one in a group of eight. There was one girl in this group. She sat on



Jonathan's right. All but one of the boys engaged in challenging behaviours. All of them except the girl and Jonathan seemed to have already formed themselves into an inclusive group at the time observations commenced.

The teacher who had approximately 14 years teaching experience, with a break in the middle of this time took up the position teaching Jonathan's class at the same time he started school. Prior to that, she taught at another school and at another level. She often made reference to the fact that teaching new entrants was a new experience for her and that she was still feeling her way.

A female teacher-aide was present with Jonathan in the classroom from 9.30 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. each day (during fitness and story writing times). The teacher-aide worked solely with Jonathan reinforcing and encouraging the behaviours and skills the teacher was requiring of the class. The teacher-aide was not a trained teacher, but had undertaken an Advanced Studies for Teachers paper at the College of Education on teaching children with disabilities. She was also the teacher-aide for the other mainstreamed children with DS in the school and worked in the library and other parts of the school.

After the first two weeks of school, the classroom teacher asked Jonathan's mother to spend some time in the classroom during the more formal activities such as printing, mathematics and reading-related tasks. Jonathan was reported to be frequently "off-task" during these activities and there was no teacher-aide time to cover these periods. Jonathan's mother spent approximately two to three hours each day in the classroom supporting Jonathan and the activities of his group for most of the term.

The curriculum in this class emphasised formal literacy activities - reading, newsboard, sharing news together and writing up someone's news on a group newsheet, story writing, printing, browsing books, word games, reading big books and poetry. Mathematics, fitness and some structured art work were also included. No developmental free-choice sessions were observed during the three months observation period, but the teacher did plan to introduce these, once other priorities had been established.

#### 2.4.2: Contexts Relevant to All Children with DS

##### Early Intervention Programme

The families of the children with DS all participated in the same family/whanau based early intervention programme from the time of their child's birth or shortly thereafter until school entry. The programme which has a strong commitment to the normalisation principle and inclusion (Nirje, 1969; Wolfensberger, 1969), involves parents and professionals working together to support and skill parents in providing ways of maximising their children's overall development in the context of their homes and communities as well as empowering them to effectively deal with disablist attitudes in the community affecting their children such as from medical and educational professionals. Approximately eight parents and their children meet with staff (speech and language therapist, developmental therapist and physiotherapist) on a one-to-one rotational basis at the early intervention programme for a half-day group session where issues are discussed and objectives are reviewed and established. Other staff (family therapist, psychologist, programme co-ordinator) are available as needed. When the child starts preschool, weekly support is provided for that child and centre by an itinerant preschool teacher from the programme, who liaises between all those concerned and works on IEP objectives in the preschool setting. The programme is proactive in nature and attempts to minimise failure or potential problems before they arise. For example, when the child enters preschool, parents are alerted to key skills such as making mature choices, which they can then target in other pertinent settings such as at home or out shopping. In this way, the child's opportunities for benefiting from inclusion are maximised in both the new setting (preschool) and existing settings. The transition to school is co-ordinated by one of the staff members in consultation with the child's parents. For the rationale underlying the programme, see Champion (1982).

Kindergartens: The three children with DS attended their local free kindergartens for approximately two years, with the exception of Mark who attended for a further year until school entry at age 6 years. All three children attended kindergarten for 4 or 5 mornings each week. The children attending were mostly 4 years old. The kindergartens were staffed by three female trained teachers and had approximately 40-45 children attending each session. Some parent-helpers and/or student teachers were present during some of the sessions. Each kindergarten ran a similar free-choice

programme where the children were free to interact with one another, the materials, their teachers and other adults (parents, caregivers, student teachers, volunteers). The philosophy underlying the kindergarten programme is for children to construct knowledge through their experiences with the environment (McMillan, 1980; Meade, 1985; Ministry of Education, 1996b; Pratt, 1985). There was a 15-minute compulsory “mat-time” at the end of each three-hour session where a teacher led the group in activities such as singing, finger-plays, discussions or stories. For the children with DS, staff aimed to incorporate into their free-play programme, specific IEP objectives which had been established with the child’s parents, early intervention itinerant teacher and the kindergarten staff. The early intervention itinerant teacher spent one session a week at each kindergarten and each day of the first week with the child at school.

Schools: While there were differences amongst the schools, such as socioeconomic backgrounds of the children, philosophies on educating children with impairments and quality of playground supervision, there were also similarities in terms of general philosophy which had implications for peer relationships and hence, inclusion. Unlike the developmental philosophy underpinning the preschool programmes, there was a greater emphasis in the schools on learning through explicit instruction. Teachers were more likely to direct and organise children, their groups and activities, evaluate their performance and control their interactions with peers during class time. There were times children were required to work together to achieve specific outcomes and other times when no interaction was permitted.

#### 2.4.3: Typically Developing Children and their Contexts

Jacob: Jacob started school on his fifth birthday. He was the older of two children. His sister was one year old at the time he started school. He attended the same kindergarten and school as Ian who had DS, although initially he was placed in a different classroom upon entry to school. Halfway through the term, when the school had a “reshuffle” to make room for new entrants, he moved into the same classroom as Ian. Jacob was considered by the kindergarten and school staff to be a very “typically developing” child with no apparent difficulties. His health was excellent.

While Jacob clearly preferred participation in outdoor activities whether at home, kindergarten or school, he did demonstrate a number of classroom-related skills on entry to school. He could print his first name reasonably consistently, reliably follow instructions, identify a few alphabet letters, attend to stories, interact with peers and adults and as noted by his father, “He shows plenty of interest in things. I believe that he’s definitely ready to learn.”

He spent most of his time at kindergarten involved with other children and he enjoyed playing with older neighborhood children at home.

Jacob’s Family: Jacob’s parents were in their late 20s and the family lived in a middle class well-established suburb. They were keen to prepare their son adequately for school but were uncertain as to what the expectations were. As Jacob’s mother reported, “I don’t know how they teach or anything about it (school) really or what the expectations are.”

Both parents had made a recent attempt at developing Jacob’s counting and pre-reading skills by encouraging him to write his name, copy letters of the alphabet and undertake activities such as matching and identifying shapes and letters in preschool activity books.

Jacob’s father’s work required regular travel both in and outside New Zealand and Jacob and his family had accompanied him on some of these trips. Apart from kindergarten, there was no other involvement of educational agencies or institutions prior to Jacob’s entry to school. The family did not have friends or family with school-aged children from whom to check out information about school selection or preparation.

Jacob’s Kindergarten: Jacob attended the same kindergarten as Ian for five mornings per week and the same general kindergarten description applies (see page 111).

Jacob’s School: Jacob and Ian also attended the same school, a description of which can be found on page 103.

Jacob's Class: Jacob was the ninth child to enter this new entrant classroom which rapidly increased in size to 14 during Jacob's first week. His female teacher had taught for 10 years, but this was her first experience of teaching new entrants. She ran a fairly structured academic programme, although there were opportunities for self-selection and free-choice within that programme. For example, during reading time, when the children were not reading with the teacher, they could choose from a wide range of reading-related activities. Jacob's teacher saw the purpose of the new entrant room as an introduction to school life, the academic side in particular. She noted, "You've got to get them into good working habits straight away...you have to work in certain parts and you know there are other times for play...the social side just sort of looks after itself, I find."

After half a term, Jacob moved into the same class as Ian where he was part of 24 children. A description of Ian's class can be found on page 103.

Neil: This typically developing boy was the elder of two children, his sister being 18 months old at the time of his school entry. Neil attended his local playcentre prior to starting school and his mother was involved at the practical and committee level of this organisation. Neil lived with his parents in the same middle-upper class suburb as Jonathan. He started school just after his fifth birthday.

Neil enjoyed participation in a wide range of activities at playcentre and at home including books, following up collage activities based on ideas from books, imaginative play involving dinosaurs and transformers, and constructing (Lego, blocks, woodwork). He was also learning to play the violin. Neil's social participation at playcentre had only recently emerged. Previously, he had spent most of his time there engaged in solitary play or involved with adults.

Neil demonstrated a large range of skills on entry to school - a strong interest in books, advanced forms of oral language (for instance, "The plane's left a vapour trail."), being able to write some letters and draw detailed pictures of things that interested him, particularly dinosaurs and transformers. He was very compliant and eager to please, often checking out with the teacher the specific nature of a required task. He took some

time to settle at school, being distressed for some time every morning after his mother or father left him.

The playcentre staff and Neil's teacher considered Neil to be a typically developing child who showed signs of being academically able.

Neil's Family: Neil's parents were in their 30s and very involved in their children's education. Their hopes and expectations from the school involved developing their son's confidence and social adjustment, gaining a broad education - not only academically, but also involving cultural and sporting activities.

Apart from playcentre, there was no other involvement of educational organisations and institutions prior to Neil's entry to school.

Neil's Playcentre: Neil attended a playcentre for approximately three years prior to his entry to school. Two trained supervisors staffed the playcentre and several parent-helpers were present during each two-and-one-half-hour session. There were three sessions held per week with approximately 20 children on the roll ranging in age from toddlers to children who were nearly five years old. The playcentre programme was based on the same philosophy of learning underlying the kindergarten programme (see page 111). Children engaged in self-initiated activities throughout the morning and sessions concluded with a fifteen-minute non-compulsory "sit-down period" attended by the majority of children, where one of the supervisors read the children stories and undertook other quiet activities with the group such as songs and finger-plays.

Neil's School and Principal: Neil attended the same school as Jonathan which is described on page 109.

Neil's Class and Teacher: Neil was in the same class as Jonathan, although by the time he entered, there were another three children present, making Neil the 21st child on the roll. In addition, a female student teacher, who was in her final year of training was present for most of the time during Neil's first three weeks of school. On some days, she had responsibility for the entire class with the classroom teacher either out of the

room or in the background. Neil's seat in the classroom was among a group of girls, some of whom he knew from playcentre.

#### 2.4.4: Initial Case Study of Child with DS, Family and School

Aspects of data gathered during the planning stages of this study are included in some of the results and therefore a description of this boy and his home and school contexts follows:

Richard: Richard who had DS was the second of four children in a two-parent family. His oldest sister was already attending the local integrated Catholic school that Richard would attend. He started school on his fifth birthday. His health was generally good, although he did experience a fluctuating hearing loss at the time of the study and he had a visual impairment, which was corrected by wearing glasses. He was a small, sociable boy who enjoyed books and most play activities, both in and outdoors.

Richard's Mother: Richard's mother was in her early 30s and had been highly involved in the early intervention programme since Richard's birth. She was the children's primary caregiver. The family lived in an established middle-class suburb and both parents had a keen involvement in their children's education. Richard's mother was interviewed on four separate occasions, prior to school entry, immediately after, two weeks after and two months after enrolment at school.

Richard's School and Principal: The school Richard attended was the local Catholic school which had approximately 210 pupils with a staff of eight teachers. One interview was undertaken with the relieving female principal of the school. She was interviewed approximately two weeks after Richard's enrolment. The school had no written policy on including children with impairments, but she stated that in practice, inclusion was very much part of the school's special character policy of "trying to accept everyone and finding the positive Christ-like aspect in everyone and recognising that each person has special gifts and abilities."

There were two other children the principal identified as having "special needs" already attending the school.

Richard's Class, Teacher and Teacher-aide: Richard's class consisted of 36 new entrant children and one female teacher who had been teaching for approximately 12 years. She was new to the concept of inclusion and had not heard of the early intervention programme Richard's family was involved with prior to Richard's entry to school. She was eager to learn as much as possible from the early intervention team and Richard's parents to make the experience as successful as possible. A teacher-aide who was actually a trained teacher and particularly interested in children with special needs came in specifically to help Richard for 15 hours a week. Usually she helped him with the same activities his peers were engaged in, but if he finished early or was disinterested, she would provide him with an alternative activity that may or may not have been similar to what his peers were doing. The teacher-aide was present during the more formal part of the programme (writing stories, colouring-in and reading) in the morning. A parent helper also came in to help the class at story writing times.

Each child had her/his own space at a table, including Richard. Approximately six children sat at each table. More formal activities such as reading, printing, religious instruction and mathematics were interspersed with less structured activities such as singing, folk dancing, art and silent reading. The classroom had a verandah attached where the children ate their lunch and opposite this was the junior play area.

One interview was undertaken with Richard's teacher approximately two weeks after his enrolment and nearly two full-day observations were undertaken in the classroom. Brief informal conversations were held with some of the classmates in the playground concerning Richard and informal comments made by the teacher-aide were also noted.

A summary analysis of details concerning the characteristics of the three children with DS (excluding Richard) and the two typically developing children and their families are shown in Table 2.



Table 2. Summary of a) Children with DS, Family and School Characteristics and b) Typically Developing Children, Family and School Characteristics

Name	Birth order	No. of Children in Family	S.E.S* (Father)	Date of School entry	Age at School entry
<b>a) Down Syndrome</b>					
Ian	1	2	1	10/03	5.1
Mark	2	4	2	02/06	6.0
Jonathan	9	9	3	17/09	5.0
<b>b) Typical Children</b>					
Jacob	1	2	2	07/05	5.0
Neil	1	2	2	27/10	5.0

Socio-economic index (Elley & Irving, 1976) where Level 1 applies to professional occupations and Level 6 to unskilled occupations

Contact was made and data were collected on the children and families in the order that they started school which was as follows: Ian (DS), Jacob (typically developing), Mark (DS), Jonathan (DS) and Neil (typically developing).

2.4.5: The Researcher

My background involved experience as a kindergarten teacher with postgraduate qualifications in Education. Prior to my full-time PhD study, I worked for 10 years as an itinerant preschool teacher with the early intervention programme in which the participants with DS were involved. My role involved facilitating the inclusion of children with DS and other impairments into their local preschools and schools. During the course of this work and during my previous graduate and postgraduate studies, I had undertaken research on issues relating to the development of children with DS in regular contexts presenting findings at conferences, in journals and during meetings for parents of children with disabilities and their teachers. The families of the children with DS in the current study either knew me or of me through my work with families who had children with DS a few years older than theirs and/or through talks I had given or material I had written. All were supportive of my philosophy of disability (seeing disability as a social construct) and my commitment to the unconditional inclusion of all children into regular educational and community settings. The mothers in particular

expressed enthusiasm about participation in this research, which was summed up by Richard's mother,

“It's not every day that you get the podium.”

Awareness of my background both limited and enhanced the quality of information I obtained from the families and in the preschools and schools. For instance, in their interviews, Ian's preschool staff who were aware of my prior employment with the early intervention programme conveyed only their positive impact, despite team members' having reported some major conflicts in philosophies and practices. On the other hand, none of the classroom teachers was aware of my background, which enabled them to speak more freely about this (and other) issues. For example, one child's teacher openly relayed her difficulties with the child, his family and the early intervention programme.

An overview of the timing and kind of data collected for each child is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Overview of Data Collected: General Pattern of Type of Data Collected and its Timing

Month prior to School Entry	Week of School Entry	2 Weeks following School Entry	Up to 6 weeks after School Entry	4 Months after School Entry
<b>Interviews:</b> a) Mother	<b>Interview:</b> Teacher	<b>Interviews:</b> a) Mother	<b>Interviews:</b> a) Classmates (6 weeks after entry)	<b>Interviews:</b> a) Mother
b) Father		b) Principal		b) Father
c) Pre-school teachers		c) Teacher-aide		c) Teacher
d) Early intervention staff				d) Teacher-aide
				e) Classmates
				f) Child
<b>Observations</b> a) Playcentre or Kindergarten	<b>Observations</b> a) First 5 days of school	<b>Observations</b> a) 2-3 hours in classroom	<b>Observations</b> a) 2-3 hours in classroom per week for up to 6 weeks after school entry	<b>Observations</b> a) approx. 2 half days in classroom
b) Early intervention clinic		b) IEP meeting		
c) Pre-entry visits to school				
d) Transition to school meeting				
	<b>Permanent Products</b> a) Early intervention report	<b>Permanent Products</b> a) Copy of IEP		
	b) School information booklet/brochure issued to parents on child's school entry			

Time Frame: Data were gathered over an 18-month period, starting in August 1991 with the interviewing of two mothers who had experienced recent transitions of both children with DS and typically developing children. This was followed by the brief case study in October 1991 of a child with DS (Richard) entering school. This case study consisted of school observations and interviews with most of the key people involved in the transition. In 1992, data were collected on the three children with DS entering school from the early intervention programme (Ian, Mark and Jonathan) and on the two typically developing children (Jacob and Neil). Since Neil did not start school until the end of October, follow-up data for Neil could not be collected until April 1993.

The number of interviews related to each child's transition is presented in Table 4. More information concerning their timing and duration are shown in Appendices F(i), G(i), H (i), I (i) and J (i).

Table 4. Number of Interviews Undertaken and Included for Each Participant

<b>Participants</b>	Ian	Mark	Jonathan	Jacob	Neil
Mother	3	4	5	3	3
Father	2	2	2	2	2
<b>Kindergarten</b>					<b>Playcentre</b>
Teacher 1	1	1	1	1	1
Teacher 2	1	1	1	1	
Teacher 3	1	1	1	1	
<b>Early Intervention</b>					
Developmental therapist	1	1	1	N/A	N/A
Sp. therapist	1	1	1	N/A	N/A
Co-ordinator	1			N/A	N/A
<b>School</b>					
Class teacher	3	2	2	2	2
Principal	1	0*	1		
Teacher-aide	2	1	1	1	N/A
Classmates (4-6)	2 each	1 each	2 each	1 (class 1) 1 (class 2)	2 each
Child	1	1	1	2	2

- None due to illness

The participants interviewed (see Table 4) were all the significant participants in each child and family’s life at the time of the transition from preschool to school and for the term thereafter. The 4-6 classmates were interviewed twice, the first occasion being approximately 4 weeks after school entry, followed by some 12-16 weeks later.

Table 5 indicates the total number of hours running record observations which were undertaken of each child or significant others involved with the child in each context.

Table 5. Number of Hours of Running Record Observations for Each Child or Meeting Pertaining to that Child

Contexts	Ian	Mark	Jonathan	Jacob	Neil
<b>Preschool</b>					
Kindergarten or Playcentre	7	0*	8	7.75	4.5
Early Intervention	5	2	2	N/A	N/A
<b>School</b>					
Transition or IEP meetings	2	1	3		
Pre-entry visits	9.5	5	5.75	3.5	2.25
First week	20	24	25	25	19.75
Following 5 weeks	9.5	8.8	6.5	8.5	7.45
Approximately 13 weeks later	5	5.25	5.5	4.5	6.0

\* None due to illness  
 NA: Not applicable

## **2.5: Data Analysis**

The data were analysed inductively. Tentative data analysis occurred throughout the data collection period. My comments, insights and reflections were recorded in an ongoing manner and emerging ideas and decisions were shared with the participants, colleagues and supervisor(s). While it was anticipated prior to the study that data collection would become progressively more focussed over time (particularly in relation to the classroom observations) as noted by Glaser and Strauss (1967), it was decided to abandon this idea and keep the focus of the observations open-ended throughout. The rationale for this was as follows: The study was an exploratory one with no known data gathered in this manner on this issue before and with a very small number of case studies. Due to funding and personal issues, the data collection period could not extend beyond the period allocated (18 months). After collecting 'complete' data on the first child (Ian), it was noted that some categories of behaviours occurred very infrequently and sometimes towards the end of the time that he and his context were being studied. (For example, his peers advocated for him in times of difficulty), yet when they did occur, they seemed to have an important bearing on the nature of 'inclusion/exclusion.' Therefore, given these circumstances, refining the categories as the study proceeded seemed unnecessarily restrictive in this kind of exploratory study. Progressively narrowing the focus as data collection proceeded and incoming data were gathered (constant comparative method, Bogdan and Biklen, 1992) would also have reduced the potential usefulness of the case study method. In an exploratory study attempting to identify how the various processes work and inter-relate, it was necessary to gather as much relevant information as possible on all the pertinent variables as it is not possible to identify the critical ones and their relationships until data gathering are complete. Therefore, most of the methods traditionally used for analysing data in qualitative research were not suitable for this study.

More formal data analysis occurred after data collection had ceased. The data were constantly revisited for themes and patterns pertinent to the research questions. Central themes included identifying inclusion, ascertaining the focal children's experiences of inclusion and identifying the sources of these differing experiences. Category generation

was facilitated by familiarisation with relevant literature, a strategy advocated by Gilham (2000).

The two processes (getting to know the literature and getting to know your case should go along simultaneously so that your reading and what you are turning up in your case study interact: they feed into each other...what you find in the literature will sensitise your perceptions (p. 38).

As well as the literature and data feeding one another, the case studies also informed one another as the data sensitised the researcher to particular activities and experiences.

This occurred both during data collection and analysis.

Data were checked against emerging categories and sub-categories illustrating the central themes to ascertain whether they fitted that particular category, required an additional category or a modification of that category. Throughout the analysis, categories and sub-categories were regularly collapsed, modified, or added to, so that those remaining most adequately represented the data as a whole. Triangulation of the data occurred as different data sources were compared and contrasted to ascertain consistent and inconsistent patterns.

The identified themes, categories and sub-categories remain close to the raw data as opposed to having been abstracted. Considerable primary data are used to illuminate the categories, so that they are transparent to the reader.

While similarities in the data or recurring themes or patterns were highlighted to allow categories to be identified which described that pattern or theme, there were some instances when quantification seemed an appropriate way to represent particular aspects of the data. For example, when there were stark contrasts such as those between Ian and Jonathan's anti-social behaviours in their preschool and school settings.

Where relevant data were available, comparisons between the typically developing children and children with DS were made to give the reader some indication of what was occurring for typically developing children in a similar context. All data analyses began with observations of the child in the school or preschool setting, with data obtained from the other sources subsequently integrated with this.



## **2.6: Data Gathering Procedures**

### **2.6.1: Procedures Used to Maximise Reciprocal Relationships between Researcher and Participants**

Much disability research has been oppressive in the sense that non-disabled researchers have set up and controlled the research agenda, often without examining their own beliefs about disability and with the expectation that people with disabilities participate on the researchers' terms, regardless of whether the topic, methods or nature of the measuring instruments seem applicable or relevant to those involved (Abberley, 1987; Morris, 1992; Oliver, 1992; Turnbull, Blue-Banning, Behr & Kerns, 1986). As noted by Oliver (1992), "Disabled people have come to see research as a violation of their experience, as irrelevant to their needs, as failing to improve their material circumstances and quality of life" (p. 105).

This issue led me to employ a number of strategies to enable a more equitable balance of power throughout the planning and undertaking of this study.

The first step involved examining my own perspective on disability through reading a wide variety of theoretical perspectives on disability (Fulcher, 1989, 1990; Oliver, 1985; 1986, 1992), reading about the perspectives of those with disabilities and their parents on the issues they confront with access to and participation in 'normal' everyday experiences such as regular school attendance (Asch, 1989; Bogdan & Taylor, 1976; Brown, 1990, 1999; Kunc, 1984; Lawson, 1990a & b; Sammut, 1995) as well as talking to parents of young children with DS concerning their experiences. In all, this information strengthened my belief that the issue of disability is not located so much within the individual, but more within the contexts in which the person participates.

This was clearly the perspective of most parents. While it was important for me to understand and be respectful of the perspectives of all the participants in order to obtain a holistic understanding of the process, this research study was an opportunity to join the families of children with disabilities as an ally in their struggles against oppression.

From this perspective, I invited two mothers of 7-year-old boys with DS to join me as partners in the planning of this research. These mothers described a wealth of experiences concerning the transitions of their children with DS and typically developing children. These included unresolved issues, factors that were helpful/not helpful, stories about other families, questions/issues they felt would be useful to include and the general usefulness of the topic. They answered many of my concerns, such as about the feasibility of including fathers and how often visits for interviews would be reasonable. Given the scarcity of useful and readable information on this issue at this important time of their lives, they stressed the importance of the information eventually being made available in a form that would benefit future children, parents and teachers and I agreed to ensure that this would happen.

Once the general topic was established, the following strategies were used to allow participants maximum control in terms of i) issues relating to the context of the study and ii) the content of the study.

As much as possible, I limited my personal commitments throughout the data collection period (1992) so that I could be available to interview participants at times they nominated. This was particularly important in gathering data on fathers, teachers and principals whose timetables were often heavily committed, but who did express interest and willingness to be involved. Frequently, they presented me with the option of coming at short notice should there be some a change in another commitment. I took up all such opportunities when they arose. This resulted in data gathering taking place at some unconventional hours such as the interviewing of two fathers at 10 p.m., a principal at 7 a.m. and several teachers at 7.30 a.m.

Each participant was also interviewed in a place convenient and suitable to her/him. Most of the parent interviews took place in the family home with the exception of one at my home (A father had an hour to fill in near my home while one of his children was having a music lesson). The interviews with principals took place in their school offices and the teachers and teacher-aides were interviewed either in their classrooms or a nearby vacant room. Children were interviewed in a place nominated by the teacher. This was usually in a small familiar room or spare classroom adjacent to the child's

classroom, the classroom itself while the other children were elsewhere such as at singing or in Mark's school, the staff room was used. This was a familiar place to all the children concerned.

While I asked to audio-tape each interview for purposes of greater accuracy, each participant (child or adult) was given the option of turning the recorder off at any stage, not having it on at all, or deleting anything they said. Two participants exercised this choice by either not having the tape-recorder on (one teacher for one interview) or by turning it off regularly throughout the interview (one principal). Permission for tape-recording was sought from all participants including children at the beginning of each interview throughout the entire data collection period. Similarly, access to participants was continually sought. It was not assumed that because participants agreed to take part at the beginning of the study that they would necessarily want to do so as the study proceeded, so access was continually negotiated.

The issue of confidentiality was reiterated regularly. I reminded participants that I would not pass on any information to anyone else connected with the study (for example, what a parent said to a teacher or vice versa), or identify any participant in the final or any other report.

Anything parents or school personnel wanted deleted from their interviews in retrospect was also done and the option to do so regularly stated. In effect, this situation rarely occurred, but when it did (for example, one mother phoned me for deletion of a comment that she had made about a school's decision), the statement was immediately deleted.

It was important to me that the participants did not feel "used" in the sense that I arrived at the setting, gathered the information I wanted, then left. I always let the participants set the pace for the interview. If there were other issues going on at the time such as a father talking about issues concerning his work or a mother preparing a child for school camp, I joined in the conversation if appropriate until the participant signaled readiness to move onto the interview topic which was loosely established when the interview time was set up. At the same time, I attempted to be as sensitive as

possible to the participant's needs by not staying on longer than necessary when people clearly had other activities and roles they needed to undertake.

I also attempted to maintain a degree of reciprocity in the relationships with the participants. While it was agreed that I could not actively be involved in a decision-making capacity and actively intervene with decisions made affecting the child, I did share as much observational data on the child that I felt would be of interest or that they asked for directly. For example, Jacob's mother frequently expressed concern about whether or not her son would be compliant at school. School observations revealed a high degree of compliance, so I relayed this information to his mother throughout the observation period. Neil's mother regularly rang me to ascertain what he had been doing and how long it took for him to settle after she or his father left him in the morning. At other times, I took the initiative by ringing her after the observations to provide a summary of the day's events. During an interview, Jonathan's father asked about his son at kindergarten, so I printed out a copy of a set of observations involving the interaction between Jonathan and a peer when tree climbing. When parents or teachers asked, printed copies of observations were given with an accompanying page of written as well as a verbal explanation. This was done so that observations would not be taken out of context or that families or schools would be likely to make major decisions such as delay their child's school entry solely on the basis of the kindergarten data.

Where possible, I also fulfilled a number of other related roles and tasks as a reciprocal gesture for participants' participation in the study. These included: finding and organising a speaker from the university on a specific topic for a Downs and Special Needs Association seminar, accessing research-based articles on various topics parents requested (such as the development of printing and mathematical skills), speaking to itinerant preschool teachers from the early intervention programme on issues surrounding inclusion, writing supporting details for ancillary hours to facilitate a child's inclusion in the classroom when asked by a school principal (based on social construction model of disability and after checking with the child's parents for approval).

After initially negotiating with participants that I would be unable to be involved with any decision-making affecting the child, I changed this agreement when observations of Jonathan were undertaken. His education appeared severely compromised by unaddressed contextual issues that remained unresolved as the term progressed, despite ongoing attempts by his parents to resolve them. I felt it was unethical to continue sitting on the sidelines watching this happen and asking his parents to tell me about their latest concerns, when they were “at the end of their tether.” When Jonathan’s mother asked me directly for “help,” (should she salvage the situation or change schools, was it her imagination or was the situation really that bad?), I studied the observational data more closely and shared it more fully with the family. The data consistently highlighted Jonathan being rejected and ridiculed by peers, poor role models in his reading and mathematics groups and no attention focussed on how Jonathan or any other new entrant might be included in classroom tasks and playground activities. However, I refrained from having any input into the crucial decision as to whether or not to persevere with the school or make a fresh start elsewhere.

Throughout the entire study, I also checked with the adult participants about whether I was being too intrusive and requesting too much involvement. For parents, this did not seem to be an issue, but the teachers expressed concern over their lack of time, despite their interest in the topic. Consequently, I interviewed them less frequently than planned. I also made it clear that the aim was to find out about the participants’ experiences as they happened. As a consequence, often when I arrived at school, the teacher or teacher-aide would talk about being excited or concerned about something in relation to the child. The mothers and one father rang me or spoke to me directly at the school about events they were experiencing which they felt were significant to the topic being investigated such as Ian’s first invitation to play at a classmate’s house after school.

Throughout the data-gathering period, I made every effort to remain non-judgmental in my reactions to what participants said and did, but to try and understand the issue(s) from their perspective. In interviews, the participants were assured that there were no right or wrong answers to any of the issues, but that the study aimed to investigate the views and experiences of the people involved in, “children starting school with

particular reference to their child". As the study proceeded, the focus changed to issues arising since the last interview.

In terms of content, parents, teachers, teacher-aides and principals were invited to tell their stories concerning the child's transition to school. The interview guide did not need to be followed rigidly and they were invited to reformulate questions, add or delete issues and share their agenda.

Where used, questions reflected the social model of disability, which locates the problem externally. For example, instead of asking, "What are your child's difficulties likely to be on entering school?", the question was framed, "As your child starts school, what do you expect/would you like the school to do for him?"

#### 2.6.2: Ethical Issues

I was guided by the draft Code of Ethics published in the Newsletter of the Sociological Association of Aotearoa, August 1990.<sup>2</sup> Participants were informed that while every endeavour was made to make the study as valuable as possible to the participants involved and that it would be made available in a readable form to them and other interested people, it also had to fulfill the Ph.D. requirements at Canterbury University. Feedback would therefore not be instant. Many of the strategies described in the previous section to maximise equal power relationships with participants in the production and execution of this research were also used for ethical reasons (for instance, issues of confidentiality, freedom to withdraw without negative repercussions, option to have material deleted, use or non-use of tape-recorder).

It was anticipated that the nature of the topic and methodology employed (widely differing beliefs concerning inclusion, many open-ended interviews with and observations of all the key participants, many of whom knew each other) would result in my having to confront a number of ethical issues as the research proceeded. In order to minimise harm to any of the participants and any disturbance to the actual transition

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<sup>2</sup> The research commenced before the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee was established, which is why no formal approval is available.

process, I dealt with the many ongoing ethical issues posed by engaging in the following strategies:

1. I continually clarified my own role which was essentially that of information-gatherer in order to gain a deeper understanding of the processes involved and also by continually referring to the draft code of ethics for sociologists (Newsletter of the Sociological Association of Aotearoa, 1990).
2. Where conflict occurred among different aspects of the guidelines, I discussed the issues with university supervisors and colleagues who had expertise in the area of concern as well as the relevant early intervention staff who had a more thorough understanding of the family and educational institution concerned.
3. I also sought external supervision from a professional in a counselling agency when I felt unable to resolve satisfactorily the issues posed by more immediate supervisors or colleagues. This tended to occur when I was invited to participate in or help resolve more complex issues such as 'should the parents move the child to another school?' By remaining uninvolved, which was the initial plan, I felt I was colluding with the oppression already taking place by a larger system (school) against a smaller system (family).

#### 2.6.3: Approaches to Reliability and Validity

Applying the concepts of 'reliability' and 'validity' to the present study in the way they have been used in the areas of tests and measurement and research designs involving group comparisons was inappropriate.

Although traditional notions of reliability and validity do not fit qualitative research, steps were taken to ensure that the overall findings are credible (external validity) and that the procedures used throughout the setting up, data collection and analysis period took into account issues that could threaten that credibility. These included:

1. The total sample of children with DS from a large early intervention programme (probably the total sample in the province<sup>3</sup>) entering school in 1992 were included, thus

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<sup>3</sup> An additional boy formed part of this cohort, but could not be contacted.

avoiding bias in the selection of the participants. Furthermore the data are as complete as possible with no participants opting out of the study or asking to have large chunks of their interviews deleted.

2. The study involved multiple visits in all key contexts for observations and interviews with the main participants. This provided opportunities for data comparisons over time and across sites. Furthermore, in terms of classroom observations, it was considered essential that they were representative of the child and his immediate context across the different curriculum areas.

3. Multiple visits and multiple data sources enabled triangulation of data to take place for consistency in themes emerging (for example, by comparing data obtained through one source of data, such as an interview with a child, by that obtained through another, such as direct observation of the child in his classroom). I did not necessarily expect consistency in behaviour across settings, but like other researchers (for example, Phillips, 1987, p. 13) was aware of the “acceptance of multiple truths” with several realities operating at the same time. Thus, parents could be simultaneously delighted with the way the child’s transition to school had gone as well as highly anxious.

Risks from relying on a single data source (for example, that the findings are method-dependent) were thus lessened by using a variety of data sources.

4. With the key participants (parents, children, teachers, teacher-aides), there were multiple contacts over a period of time (approximately five months with each child and related setting). This type of regular contact facilitated my getting to know the participants well and the participants’ behaving as naturally as possible.

5. When I was unsure of aspects of data collected, it was checked out with the participants. For example, several of the participants (usually the parents) were rung after meetings I observed, to check out omitted or unclear details. During interviews when it was unclear what a participant meant, clarification was asked for at the time. It was also asked for when during the interviews what seemed clear at the time of the interview, seemed to have an alternative explanation during transcription.



6. A small audio-tape-recorder was used to record all interviews when permission was given. Field notes were also recorded during visits, but not recorded on audiotape. Using both procedures concurrently, it was aimed to minimise the risk of recording selectively or reinterpreting events.

7. The “voice of the participants” and their direct behaviour in context have been included in the presentation of the results for readers to determine for themselves the authenticity of the findings.

8. Self-awareness: I was aware that my relationship with the participants affected the quality of data obtained and noted the impact of this throughout the setting-up and data collection period. For example, the head teacher at one kindergarten was very aware of my previous background as a staff member of the early intervention programme. Thus, despite her disagreements with current early intervention team members over ways of managing Ian’s behaviour and his school transition I sensed that this teacher tried to present the work of the early intervention programme in a more positive light than how she genuinely perceived it. She downplayed the issues of conflict and I had difficulty getting her to elaborate more fully, which I suspected was due to her knowledge of my background. Interestingly, a classroom teacher who did not know about my prior background as an early intervention staff member provided considerable detail concerning her negative reactions to beliefs held and actions taken by early intervention staff. These included reports containing too much information and her perception that their expectations for the child’s achievement were too high.

9. The participants’ natural contexts were used (home, preschool, school, early intervention clinic) as the site of data gathering. This was done so that the participant’s realities would be more likely to be revealed than artificial and unfamiliar procedures (for instance, one-off questionnaires or interviews) where there may be a conscious effort to show themselves in the best possible light or as Wilson (1977) stated, “A person filling out a questionnaire, responding to an interview, or behaving in an experiment - even though he is trying to be genuine - may not be able to provide accurate information about his usual behaviour in real, complex setting” (p. 248).

Furthermore, although generalisability is not a key objective of qualitative research, the use of natural settings may enhance to some extent, applicability to other samples, as noted by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983), “Since it investigates social processes in everyday settings rather than in those set up for the purposes of research, the danger that the findings will apply only to the research situation is generally lessened” (p. 24).

10. Data collection was focussed as much on the wider systems surrounding the child as the child himself. As stated by Bronfenbrenner (1979, p. xv), “Human abilities and their realisation depend in significant degree on the larger social or institutional content of individual activity or put more simply, the contexts in which participants participate have a major impact on how that person develops.”

Measures were also put in place to address issues concerning reliability, but again not in a statistical sense. I operated on the premise that unique situations such as these individual case studies cannot be reconstructed precisely as each participant, context and the relationship I have with each is very different from the other. Despite careful documentation of the research methods and procedures used, as noted by Le Compte and Goetz (1982) (more specifically, the issues the study addresses, methods used, time frame, who was involved, my status and perspective on key issues, description of data analysis), other researchers may still fail to obtain identical results as the participants, researcher and the relationship they have with each other may be very different from those involved in the present study. The type and amount of information participants consider important in passing on to the researcher is very much dependent on her relationship with each participant (Le Compte & Goetz, 1982).

### CHAPTER 3: THE NATURE OF INCLUSION

Given that a successful transition to school is dependent on the new entrant taking on the role of a valued and contributing member of her/his class and school community, the first task involved investigating what constitutes such meaningful inclusion. In this chapter, I consider issues pertinent to inclusion before presenting the results of the observational and interview data.

Not all experiences of inclusion were equally effective in preparing children for living in an inclusive society. There are situations, in which children can be physically present, but excluded from meaningful participation because they are ignored by peers or assigned to devalued or inferior roles (for instance, being treated as a much younger child or a pet). It is important to distinguish demeaning, destructive or meaningless forms of inclusion from socially and psychologically enhancing forms, so that the potential benefits of inclusive education are actually realised for all participants. This means that children include one another respectfully and in valuing roles on all appropriate and significant occasions, even if they do not consider a particular child a personal friend. Because children in classrooms are working at the upper end of their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978), engaging in such interactions publicly involves risk (Hatch, 1987). They need to feel safe in the knowledge that they will be respected and not shamed (that is, included as valued contributors by their teacher and fellow classmates) regardless of their making mistakes, learning at different rates or displaying unconventional behaviour. Children also need to feel that they have valuable contributions to make (Kunc, 1992) and are succeeding in their learning for them to remain motivated (Blumenfeld, 1992). Being included by valued peers enhances this process. Children may disengage from participation in school tasks and find other roles, some undesirable, such as class clown in which they can be successful and hence included, if conditions are such that they do not promote facilitative inclusion (Erickson, 1996). For many new entrants, developing social relations and friendships is problematic (Ramsay, 1991). Yet, when children do not experience belonging as valued participants by at least some members, not only are they denied valuable opportunities for learning social skills, but opportunities for benefiting from academic and other learning activities are also

restricted. This is because social and cognitive structures are situated and developed in human interaction (Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978).

### **3.1: Rationale for investigating Inclusion Using Face-to-Face Interaction Data**

In studying issues such as gender, social class and inclusion, there is clearly an interaction between the attributes of the child and family and the school context and practices, both of which are affected by society's economic and social structure. In order to understand the structure or nature of such issues, Mehan (1992, 1998) claims that this process is most effectively achieved from the "bottom-up" as opposed to the "theory-down." "If we are to understand the structure of inequality, we must continue to examine the interactional mechanisms by which that structure is generated" (Mehan, 1992, p. 16).

In other words, it is only possible to gain a deeper understanding of social processes such as inclusion when one investigates their operation in situations where they are generated (for example, the classroom). The most basic unit for examining such processes is in face-to-face interactions. This is supported in studies showing how characteristics such as gender (Alton-Lee & Densem, 1992), race (Alton-Lee, Nuthall & Patrick, 1987) and social class (Gumperz & Herasimchuk, 1975; Michaels, 1981), mediate educational processes which consequently result in differential outcomes. Face-to-face interactions constitute sites where processes such as inequality, competence and disability are constructed and either maintained or reconceptualised. Through examination of such interactions, it becomes possible to ascertain how disability is constructed and determine the effects of the school on the child and vice versa. Without close investigation of the peer interactions in classrooms, it would be impossible to ascertain whether children were optimally benefiting from their inclusive experiences (both short- and long-term) or were engaged in a stereotypical process where children with impairments were the recipients of acts of charity or oppression.

Problems occur if children experience only a limited range of low-level interactions as this will not allow them access to higher forms of social and academic development conducive to overall well-being and living in an inclusive society (Meyer, 2001).

Typically developing children, too, fail to acquire skills related to valuing differences and feeling comfortable with diversity, which are necessary for living and working in an inclusive society. Lower forms of inclusion (polite interchanges, being helped, momentary episodes of social play) form part of the range of interactions characterising inclusion (Murray-Seegart, 1989; Meyer, Minondo, Fisher, Larson, Dunmore, Black & D'Aquanni, 1998) and may provide opportunities for further connections with specific peers. Depending on the circumstances, there are many times when such lower forms of inclusion and exclusion (including being ignored) are appropriate. For example, while listening to a story, it is generally not appropriate to be included or include others in a personal conversation. However, if a child's total social life consists only of polite interchanges, being helped and other low-level forms of inclusive interactions, developmental outcomes for both children with and without impairments are compromised (Kunc, 1992; Murray-Seegart, 1989; Solomon, Schaps, Watson & Battistich, 1992). A way of conceptualising inclusion at the chalk-face is by investigating the range of roles children are regularly engaged in. Ideally, children need to engage in the full-range of roles pertinent to their educational setting (Murray-Seegart, 1989; Meyer, 2001).

### Roles and Relationships

Inclusion in a group, community or institution requires certain relationships and particular roles. The issue of role assignment is particularly important, as that role will influence many other aspects of the child's interactions and consequent quality of relationships. Children cannot easily adopt desirable roles of motivated learner, friend or valued contributor if teachers and peers assign them demeaning or exclusionary roles. As noted by Bronfenbrenner (1986), "Children who feel rootless or caught in conflict...find it difficult to pay attention in school" (p. 432).

Consequently, they may take on other roles in which they can satisfy their immediate needs.

Being considered by teachers as successful in one's role did not necessarily mean a child was included as a group member. Preschool children could participate in their roles as active learners and be considered successful whilst they were regularly

excluded by their peers, included in demeaning roles, or kept in a very narrow range of roles (for example, only as occasional playmate, tolerated classmate). Similarly, children could successfully fulfil the school's role requirements by being compliant and undertaking the specified tasks yet not be included at any significant level other than classmate. It would seem that teachers did not always view belonging as a valued member of a dyad or group a critical part of a child's role, their main focus often centred on the correct undertaking of tasks or when DS was present, no disruptive behaviour during tasks. However, if inclusion is the goal, encompassing sub-goals such as: a) learning to value diversity, b) feeling comfortable with individual differences, c) participating in a life-style similar to one's age-mates and d) acquiring the academic and other skills necessary for participation in an inclusive society, the kinds of roles all children are assigned need to reflect these outcomes. For this reason, it was important to investigate the roles the focal children and their peers enacted during activities where children had the opportunities to form their own groups. These included play, lunchtime and choosing times and also situations where the teacher selected the groups (for instance, reading groups, which had an assigned activity such as reading the blown-up books), but no end-product was required.

### **3.2: Roles Ascribed to Focal Children (DS and Typically Developing)**

The following section outlines the three main categories of roles identified from the data. These were: (i) being excluded from any role, (ii) included into inferior roles, and (iii) included into same status roles. Subcategories are included to illustrate the variations of each main category.

#### Categories describing Social Relationships

##### 3.2.1: Exclusion

There were three main types of exclusion evident in the data. They involved (i) active exclusion, (ii) ignoring/passive exclusion and (iii) teasing.

##### *(i) Active exclusion*

Some incidents of active exclusion were easily identifiable since they consisted of audible statements pertaining to excluding the child, with behaviour reflecting the statement's intentions. For example,

A group of children were playing the card game 'Snap.' When Jonathan hesitated, a dominant peer announced to the group, "Just leave him (Jonathan) out. He doesn't know how to play." The group continued the game as if Jonathan was not there.

Another form of active exclusion consisted of peers harassing the child when the child clearly did not like it. These kinds of behaviours involved children spitting at, hurting, verbally abusing and performing other antisocial acts that the focal child did not initiate, provoke or enjoy. For instance,

During an interval break, Mark stands in the playground looking around. James (from the new entrant class) gets very close to Mark's face and says, "Hello" several times in the same monotone. Mark backs off a little and says, "No." James goes off to a nearby friend in the playground and says to him, "Look at that boy there. He said, "No." Come and have a look. He goes like this with his tongue (referring to Mark). James imitates putting his tongue in and out of his mouth. James pokes his tongue out at Mark. Mark walks off a little and watches children playing. James returns with another boys as well as the first boy. The boys say, "Hello, Hello, Hello" to Mark in unison and laugh at Mark. One of the boys throws his lunch paper at Mark after screwing it up first. Mark looks at the ground and shakes his head. Peter squeals at him and pats his cheeks. The others make growling noises at him, then laugh. The boys leave for a minute then return and continue saying, "Hello" to Mark repeatedly. Mark pokes his tongue out at the boys....

Incidents of such behaviour occurred to Jonathan at kindergarten and to Mark, Jonathan and Neil at school.

### ***(ii) Ignoring/passive exclusion***

Ignoring was a more subtle, but deliberate form of exclusion from the child's desired or assigned role. Passive exclusion consisted of unintentional exclusion such as a focal child trailing at the back of the group and no-one noticing. Although the distinction between ignoring and passive exclusion cannot be made on the basis of the observational data, it is important to note the difference, because peers may have different roles to learn. If they are deliberately ignoring the child because of discomfort and/or not knowing how to repair interaction breakdowns, this is different from generally including and feeling comfortable with the child, but not including her/him on the odd occasion. Regardless of the reason, the effects on the child are the same. In the following example, Jonathan's classmates ignore him as if he did not exist.

On the spur of the moment, Jonathan's teacher takes the class outside to look at a group of ducks waddling by. The children excitedly chatter amongst themselves in pairs or groups, while Jonathan walks on his own at the back of the group as if he were not there. It is not possible to ascertain whether the children ignoring Jonathan was intentional or not.

Sometimes ignoring and active exclusion occurred during the same episode. For example, during an organised game of tag involving the entire class, Jonathan needed someone to touch him to "free" him. He had been standing for considerable time waiting (ignored) while his classmates had been tagged and "freed" several times during that same period of time. When the teacher-aide asked, "Who is going to free Jonathan?" several children called out, "Not me!" In this case, passive exclusion (leaving him waiting) developed into active exclusion. ("Not me.")

Another form of ignoring involved children talking to a nearby adult instead of to the child directly. For example, a child at Jonathan's table talked about going to a party. Jonathan responded, "Me party." Instead of responding directly to Jonathan, the child asked the teacher-aide behind him, "Whose party is he (Jonathan) going to?"

### *(iii) Teasing*

Children experienced exclusion and could be denied a role in an activity when they were teased. Teasing that was mutually reciprocal and had an element of play did not fit into this category. Included in this category were incidents where the child showed clearly visible signs of not liking or resisting the teasing. For example:

In the mechanical corner, Sean holds a small screw in front of Jonathan's face very close to his eyes. Sean says to Paul, "He's (Jonathan) scared of this screw." Paul replies, "He's scared of his pants. He's scared of his poos." The two boys laugh as Sean continues to hold the screw right in front of Jonathan's face. Jonathan looks anxious and tries to avoid the screw by moving his face away from the screw, but Sean moves the screw to wherever Jonathan moves his face. Jonathan then leaves the activity.

Also included in this category were incidents where the child with DS did not complain about the teasing, but the teasing showed a lack of respect for the child's differences. For example, peers patted the child's cheeks or stared intensely into the child's eyes. While infants commonly explore one another's faces by touching (Walker, Messinger Fogel & Karns, 1992), in our culture such touching is usually



considered disrespectful and inappropriate beyond the toddler period.

### 3.2.2: Included into Inferior Roles

Eight types of inclusion into inferior roles emerged from the data. These involved inclusion as: (i) the object of a caregiver, (ii) invisible member, (iii) the object of peer domination, (iv) 'scapegoat', (v) a much younger child with the peer adopting an 'understanding' parent role, (vi) an oddity, (vii) subordinate/authoritarian, and (viii) a dare-devil or included for one's own purposes.

#### *(i) The object of a caregiver*

The child's peers (usually girls) adopted the role of caregivers and took responsibility for the child's welfare, without consulting the child or noticing whether or not it was appropriate in the context. The underlying assumption was that the child needed "looking after" (charity) irrespective of whether or not the child did. The following example illustrates how a group of Richard's peers positioned him as an object of charity while they positioned themselves in the superior role of caring 'grown-ups.'

Richard is looking at a book about tigers in the library. Two girls (Louise and Debbie) sit on either side of him reading their books. Louise says to Debbie, "You can help me look after him (Richard)." Richard is busy looking at his book. Rachel arrives and asks, "What is Richard doing?" Louise says, "We're here looking after him." Rachel says, "I know how to look after him." ... Richard is vocalising animatedly in relation to the pictures in his book, naming the animals and sounds. Louise asks Richard, "How are you?" Richard points out a cat in the book and says, "Cat." Louise replies, "Yes. Do you want to look at this?" (showing him her book). Richard takes her book and he says, "Look!" as he points to a monkey. Louise says, "Yeah!" to Richard, then says to Debbie, "He (Richard) likes my one...."

Despite Richard's physical presence and accurate undertaking of the activity, he was spoken about indirectly ("He likes my one." - book). When he was questioned about his wellbeing in the middle of the activity ("How are you?"), the question was not about his present state or activity (he was obviously well and undertaking the specified task). It was a stereotypical question directed at people of lower status such as those with identifiable impairments. It implies that a person with a disability is sick in some way and therefore needs care. Richard's peers adopted roles as "caregivers." They negotiated amongst themselves who should look after him. When Rachel joined the group by saying that she too, could look after Richard, Louise tried

to 'win' the position as the most favoured caregiver by commenting that Richard liked her choice of book.

***(ii) Included as invisible member***

Being included as an invisible member took place in 2 forms: i) a passive unawareness of the focal child's presence or ii) a more deliberate ignoring, which could be either the result of discomfort or a lack of understanding. This category applies to the latter category. Since a key aim of inclusion is for children to learn to relate to one another with respect and integrity irrespective of differences, this aim cannot be realised if children avoid direct interaction with each other. An example of avoidance occurred in an incident involving Jonathan and Michael who were asked to deliver the class roll to the school office. Observations of other children performing this task indicated that they usually interacted with one another as they carried the clipboard. There was no such interaction between Jonathan and Michael. While Jonathan carried the roll, Michael ran on ahead, seemingly oblivious of Jonathan's presence. While Michael waited for Jonathan to hand over the roll in the office, he then ran back to the classroom on his own, waited at the door, then as soon as Jonathan caught up, the pair entered the classroom together. There was no communication between the pair and unlike the previous category, there was no apparent concern about Jonathan.

***(iii) Included as object: peer domination***

Another type of unequal status between members occurred when peers disregarded the message or intention of the child's communication and coerced him into a role he clearly did not want. In the following example, Ian's voice was silenced when a peer insisted on his playing a particular role, instead of respecting his wish not to.

Keri puts a veil on Ian. Ian says to her, "No, go away."

She tries again. Ian backs off, then attempts to go outside (probably to avoid having the veil put on him). Keri says, "No, Ian." Keri tries to put the veil on Ian again at the door. Ian says "No" to Keri and lightly hits her. Keri then reports Ian's hitting to the teacher-aide.

Keri to Teacher-aide, "He (Ian) hit me on the back." Teacher-aide to Keri, "Well, what were you doing? Maybe he was telling you that he didn't like wearing that veil."

In the above example, when the children were free to negotiate their own roles, Keri ignored Ian's non-verbal and verbal messages when he clearly communicated his wish not to be involved in her dress-up game.

***(iv) Included as 'scapegoat'***

Children who were seen as different, non-compliant or "naughty" were sometimes included in the role of a scapegoat as in the following example:

When the kindergarten children were gathered around the mat for their morning tea, the teacher asked the group, "Who has left this collage here?" (on the floor). Despite Ian not having been at the collage table that morning, a number of children immediately call out, "It's Ian's." Ian is reprimanded for not tidying up his belongings and told to put the collage away, which he does, despite it not being his.

By automatically assigning Ian the scapegoat role, his peers constructed a stereotype of a child with a disability being the cause of trouble.

***(v) Included as much younger child: peer adopts 'understanding' parent role***

Another role peers cast the child with DS into was that of a younger child while peers took on the role of 'understanding parent'. Instead of complaining directly to Ian about his anti-social behaviour (hitting and taking items), a child (Toni) adopted the 'understanding' parents' role and suggested that another peer (Jeremy) also adopt this role,

Toni to Jeremy, "He's (referring to Ian) only three." (He was in fact, two days off his fifth birthday.)

Toni suggested that Jeremy be more accepting of Ian's aversive or immature behaviour, because she thought that Ian was only three years old.

There were also other incidents where children used 'baby-language' when interacting with the child with DS, often in response to unconventional or more immature behaviours. For example, when Jonathan took the library card out of the slip from the back of his library book, Simon tried to get the card off him by putting his hand out and asking, "Ta...ta...ta?"

***(vi) Included as oddity***

Children with DS were sometimes placed in the role of an oddity or object of ridicule. In this role, children did not interact directly with the child with DS, but when issues arose, they summoned a teacher-aide to deal with the problem. At the same time, they ridiculed him, talked about and laughed at him, which suggested that they framed the child as an undesirable 'other' (not like us).

There are three typically developing boys present with Mark at the construction activity (Clever sticks) during developmental time. The teacher-aide explains and shows Mark how the sticks join together, then leaves. Mark reaches over and takes out some sticks, which he puts beside him. He tries to lock some together before reaching over and tipping out the contents of the whole box. One of the boys comments, "Oh Mark!" James calls out to the teacher-aide, "Mrs B, Mrs B, oh look! Mark tipped them all out." ...Mark starts putting them back in the box. James laughs and says to the other boy, "He's (Mark) putting them back in." The boy says, "Yeah" and laughs too. Both boys look at Mark and continue laughing at him as the teacher-aide helps Mark put some sticks away and use some for building.

Mark is not included as a fellow member or even potential member of the group playing with the 'Clever Sticks' and his activities are laughed at.

***(vii) Included as subordinate/authoritarian***

The sixth category of inferior inclusion involved peers including children with DS in a subordinate role as a student. This category involved peers deliberately taking on the role of 'mini' teacher or disciplinarian. It differed from peer domination (category iii) because the peer aligned her/himself with the role and status of teacher whereas in category iii, the peer coerced the child into a role she/he desired. It also differed from category v where an excuse was generated to rationalise the behaviour, as in this category the peer attempted to impose the conventional school expectation of a new entrant on the child. In the following incident, Rebecca 'disciplined' Jonathan to conform to the teacher's explicit rule (reading a book after the completion of story writing).

Jonathan is reading the pile of class name-cards in the book corner. He looks at his own name and says to himself, "That Jonathan." Rebecca who is next to him says, "Jonathan, read a book." Jonathan replies, "No." Rebecca says to him, "Read a book, Jonathan. I'm trying to make you be good. Read a book

now Jonathan...read a book, Jonathan...read a book now, Jonathan.” Jonathan says, “No!” Rebecca says, “Yes.”

*(viii) Included for own purposes (as dare-devil)*

There were instances where peers included the child in the role of “dare-devil” to fulfil their own desires. Possibly knowing that their chances of being caught were relatively high, to protect their own integrity, it was safer to have the child with DS play this role since in some cases, they already had a reputation for being “naughty.”

Since Jonathan had experienced considerable exclusion, he seemed prepared to take on virtually any role to be included. The following example illustrates Jonathan being befriended (included) to fulfil the role of ‘dare-devil.’

Simon to Jonathan, “See...go on, go on” (pointing to the stickers on the teacher’s desk). Simon - Jonathan, “Get one of those stickers.” Simon smiles at Jonathan as Jonathan starts walking towards the teacher’s desk to take one, looking back and smiling at Simon as he does so. On just about touching the stickers, he turns around and returns to Simon, without them, shaking his head and saying, “No.”

Similarly, when Jonathan was already ‘misbehaving’ by putting his foot on the books of children who were silent reading, thus covering up the pictures,

George suggested to Jonathan, “Hey, kick Simon’s! (rival’s book)....kick Simon’s.” Simon then says to Jonathan, “No, do it to George! Do it, Jonathan. Do it Jonathan!” The teacher notices and tells Jonathan not to engage in the behaviour.

In both scenarios, Jonathan is used as a means towards his peers’ own ends, either to get a desired object (sticker) or to retaliate against a ‘foe.’ Jonathan’s need to be included is used to satisfy others’ needs. He is given the role of “naughty” boy.

Summary: Effects of Assigning Child Inferior Roles

No matter how benign the intentions, when the dominant group (typically developing children) retain their superior status, assigning the other (child with disability) an inferior role, the kinds of outcomes anticipated from an inclusive education are thwarted. For children with impairments to participate in the range of roles necessary for their optimal development (such as friend or co-worker on a task) and for their

peers to derive optimal benefits from the inclusion process, a fundamental ingredient in the majority of interactions needs to be equal-status relationships. Equitable relationships cannot be developed on a basis of pity or an assignment of the role 'other' (not like us).

Giving help when it is clearly not needed or wanted such as in the example with Richard and his peers, is disempowering and indicates a lack of dignity and respect. When the desire of helpers to perform charitable acts overrides the recipient's personal boundaries, sense of competence and autonomy, the help is disabling. When help giving is non-reciprocal and the only basis for the relationship, the inequity in the relationship will act as a barrier to the development of more authentic relationships. Ignoring the boundaries of children with impairments in order to fulfil one's own needs involves a failure to meet a vital outcome of inclusion. This outcome consists of accepting and relating to people with impairments as individuals as opposed to assigning them a stereotypical role of 'helpless/victim/sick' and responding to them as such.

A predominance of interactions placing a child in any particular inferior role can prevent her/him from gaining access into more valued roles. Being part of a particular group as a friend or effective/valued co-worker or task partner requires real knowledge of the child. In absence of real knowledge, children may operate on stereotypical information based on differences they perceive at face value. This can obliterate seeing the child's humanness, his diverse contributions, interests and abilities, which in turn, mitigates against the children getting to know one another accurately. Since the goals of inclusion involve learning how to respond to diversity with dignity and respect, feeling comfortable with impairments (and other differences) and interpreting communicative intent to facilitate communication, it is evident that when children are included in inferior roles, such outcomes cannot occur. Being included in inferior or demeaning roles also interferes with enhanced developmental outcomes. For a child to be included as an equal requires her/him to contribute to a relationship as well as having her/his contribution valued. Only as an active and valued participant can one develop and extend already-existing skills. In the assignment and acceptance of inferior-status roles, the expectations are for the child to operate according to some stereotype such as being helpless or an oddity. A

preponderance of such interactions are not characteristic of an authentic relationship as one partner is being responded to on the basis of preconceived expectations instead of genuine shared meanings. Common ground, equal status and reciprocity are thus essential ingredients within peer group relationships in order for positive developmental and social outcomes to accrue.

When children are repeatedly assigned low-status roles, they are likely to internalise those roles and behave as if the messages were true. For instance, if children are regularly perceived as oddities, they come to believe that they are odd and hence, unacceptable playmates, co-workers or classmates. Feedback the children receive from their inclusion into deviant or demeaning roles is likely to reinforce their odd, deviant or helpless status, which in turn is likely to affect their behaviour. They may make fewer attempts at trying to solve their own problems if they know that someone will help them regardless of need, or they may avoid peers if they know the feedback will reinforce their own negative beliefs about themselves.

### 3.2.3: Inclusion into Same Status Roles

If the goal is including all members into regular settings and enabling them to experience a life-style typically enjoyed by others in that setting, then part of that goal encompasses having a range of valid roles to play. For roles to be valid (that is, developmentally enhancing and valued) children in dyads and groups need to participate in same-status relationships. The following section presents the range of equal status roles the children in the study participated in. At this point, the critical issue is the presence of same status relationships, not whether or not the relationships were sustained.

#### ***(i) Inclusion as 'politeness'***

These interactions consisted of brief encounters, polite interchanges and pleasantries with any classmates. They usually involved brief everyday interactions consisting of 'here and now' issues, such as "Excuse me," "Can I've a look?", "Is that yours?" Usually, there was a brief response such as in the incident below. While such interactions may have involved children who were friends, often they occurred amongst children nearby such as the classmate next to a child in line or one who was using a desired piece of equipment.

Ian and Erin who are friendly, but belong to different peer groups during self-selected activities, share the following brief encounter during developmental time. Ian walks over to Erin who is using the whiteboard. Ian asks her, "Turn?" She replies, "Oh ok, but no scribble. It's (whiteboard) just for writing on, ok?" Ian - Erin, "Yeah." She finishes her writing, then hands Ian the whiteboard. Erin leaves to undertake another activity.

***(ii) Inclusion as occasional playmate***

The role of playmate was distinguished from that of 'friend' by the temporary nature of the relationship. Despite the apparent mutual satisfaction and enjoyment, being a playmate did not usually extend beyond a particular activity on that particular day. It differed from 'politeness' as there were considerably more mutually reciprocal interchanges involving both participants.

The following example illustrates two peers engaging in this role. The class had just been dismissed for morning break and Jonathan saw Hamish (a classmate) on the mound.

Jonathan walks over to him and encourages Hamish in his activity, saying, "Jump!" (from mound) and praising him, ("Yep, jump.") Hamish watches Jonathan jump, then Jonathan starts running around the mound with Hamish chasing him. There is much laughter between them. They switch roles and Jonathan chases Hamish. Jonathan sits down to take a stone out of his shoe. Hamish waits for him. When ready, Jonathan starts running. Hamish follows and says, "Hey, got you!" when Hamish catches Jonathan. Both laugh. Jonathan runs off through the tunnel, saying, "Can't catch me...!" and Hamish follows. Both walk over the tunnel, then Jonathan states, "Over here." They walk together....

This episode continued in a similar vein for 20 minutes, with both boys initiating and following, switching roles as chaser and the one being chased. They negotiated where they are going, what counted as being "caught." ("Hey, got you!") and because they shared the same goals for the activity, they waited for one another when issues arose (such as Jonathan needing to take the stone out of his shoe).

***(iiia) Valued classmate: incorporates active participant in academic or other group task***

These types of relationships were similar to the two previous categories. They involved politeness and a series of interchanges concerning the assigned task, but



children also had to demonstrate skills of joint attention on task-content as they supported and respected each other in the process. The children involved did not necessarily play together or view themselves as friends. They worked or shared something together for varying reasons (such as a shared interest in the activity/topic as in the first example below) or the teacher assigned them to work in a particular group or pairs (as illustrated in the second example). In essence, for incidents to be classified into this category, children had to demonstrate skills of joint attention on the content while supporting and interacting respectfully with each other in the process (that is, interpret the child's communicative intent).

In the following example Neil and Henry share and discuss concepts in a book while they were seated on the mat with the class. Although the teacher required the children to perform the same task of selecting and reading a book, how the activity was undertaken was left up to the children. They could read the books alone or in pairs. Henry is sitting next to Neil on the mat. The bell has just rung and the teacher has not yet arrived.

Neil peers over looking at Henry's book and says to him, "...that was a volcano, isn't it?" Henry-Neil, "But it doesn't really look like one, does it?" Neil to Henry, "No, but it is...that bit...it's bubbling over." Neil to Henry, "It's a dinosaur book because I can see all the dinosaurs there. (Henry's book)." ... Points to something in Henry's book. Neil to Henry, "Look at it there." Henry asks Neil a question (inaudible).

The next example illustrates Ian's inclusion in his reading group one term after his entry to school. Most of the group had seats at Ian's table and after reading instruction, all were required to colour in a photocopy of a picture from the previously-read text with text underneath.

Ian picks up a crayon and sees his name on the end of it. He shows it to Alex, "That name – Ian." Alex does not notice. He is busy colouring. The teacher-aide says to Alex, "Ian is showing you something." Alex looks and Ian repeats to Alex, "Look name." Alex responds and replies, "Yes, that's yours." Both colour in their respective pictures. Ian's picture is not as neat as his peer's and his choice of colours is unconventional. Ian shows his picture to Philip opposite him, "My one ... babbles [indecipherable]... see Philip." Philip looks and says, "That's good." Alex then shows Ian his colouring. Ian looks at it and says, "Nice." Ian shows Alex his (colouring), "Look at my one." Alex replies, "Yours is going to look good." Both smile at each other. When completed, Ian

folds it and places it in his reading folder, which he gets out of his locker. Elliot to Ian, "It goes in your ?? [inaudible] book." Ian to Elliot, "Oh." Ian places it in his poetry book.

When Alex looks at what Ian is showing him, he responded with respect and interest even if the request was not strictly on the topic. Similarly, when he showed his work to Philip, he was also supportive, despite a) not all of Ian's language being decipherable, b) the colour of his rabbit being blue whilst the others in the group chose the more conventional 'brown' and c) Ian's colouring being less accurate than that of his peers. Alex similarly responded with warmth and positive feedback and despite the more immature error Ian made at the end, Elliot provided Ian with the essential information to be successful in a respectful manner. All of Ian's more unconventional or immature behaviours were potential sites for exclusion as they were in other classrooms, but in this particular classroom, his diversity was valued, which gave him access to supportive interactions.

***(iiib) Included as valued class member: peers advocate for child***

Peers sometimes advocated for another child in the face of adversity. This usually occurred in contexts where the child was considered a valued member of the class generally. For example, Matthew who was friendly with Ian advocated for him when children from another class took his ball away and when classmates inadvertently blocked Ian's access to his locker. Also, in Neil's class, the girls who sat near him and had attended playcentre with him advocated for him when others commented on his perceived lack of knowledge of school rules. While these girls did not consider themselves to be Neil's friends or vice versa, they clearly saw him as a valued fellow-classmate.

***(iv) Friend***

The role of friend involved mutual seeking out of one another on multiple occasions in a variety of contexts. It usually, (but not in every interaction) incorporated the interactions evident in the previously mentioned equal status roles such as pleasantries, brief talk about "here and now" activities and engagement in mutually satisfying activities often involving multiple interchanges. However, unlike the previous roles, when children were friends, their interactions were with the same child or group of children (not with children at random) over a period of time and most

often, these relationships extended to out of school times. Behaviours identified as characterising mutually reciprocal friendships included the following: participating with the same peer(s) over time; regularly seeking one another out; waiting until one partner was finished an activity before engaging in or resuming a joint activity; at least one in the dyad or group having the ability to repair break-downs; both/all participants contributing to the relationship, reinforcing and motivating one another; referring to previously enjoyed activities (their shared history) in conversation; and talk about, and/or actual visits to, one another's homes. It was inappropriate to identify the role of mutual friends from the observational data alone without the children's perspectives, as children and adults are known to have different interpretations of friendships (Carr, 2000). Therefore, for children to be considered as having a friend, both had to mention each other as a "friend/friends" during the course of the data collection period (usually noted in field notes) and the final interview.

Summary (Same status relationships): For (authentic) inclusion to be actually occurring, children need to experience the full range of equal status interactions shortly after starting preschool or school. Being included in ongoing less-intimate roles, for instance, exchanging pleasantries, engaging as a random playmate and task partner with most classmates is necessary even when a child belongs to a particular self-selected peer group. First, this is important because when friendships dissolve, the child has a supportive pool of others with whom he/she can develop new friendships. Second, in view of the wider goal – an inclusive society, children with and without impairments need to continue developing skills and beliefs appropriate to their ages, which are facilitative of this goal. Interactions at all levels are an essential part of life for participants in any setting. Third, to be effectively included in some classroom tasks requires participation in non-social roles, such as when waiting or watching or listening to something. The inclusion of a child with an impairment in a friendship role or as a valued class member suggests that classmates have acquired some of the necessary skills and beliefs facilitative of living and working in an inclusive society. At the same time, the child experiences a context in which to enhance his development of culturally-valued skills including skills pertaining to group participation or friendships. When a child is a valued member of a particular dyad or group(s) it becomes possible for her/him to experience facilitative inclusion by also developing more specific friendships. Only within this context of belonging

can the child make optimal developmental gains and peers gain maximal benefits from participation in an inclusive classroom. For example, when a child with impairment actually belongs, her/his classmates and/or friends may need to learn to advocate for her/him in times of adversity or make decisions about what level of support to provide in differing situations. Peers are less likely to engage in such behaviours if they view the child as a non-entity (McArthur, Bray, Smith, Gaffney, & Gollop, 2000) or they may do so without the necessary dignity/respect if they view the child as an inferior being.

### **3.3: Processes Affecting Inclusion**

Observations indicated a major factor in hindering more favourable outcomes for some children, despite the adoption of same status roles as for 'inclusion as politeness', task partners, occasional playmates or friends was the breakdown in relationships, which neither party seemed able to repair. These breakdowns occurred at differing stages in episodes. These could be early on, after some mutually satisfying interactions had taken place or during certain curriculum subjects, but not others. Given that once friendships are established, participants have a right to expect certain things from each other (Lutfiyya, 1990), when one member engages in aversive behaviour to a friend(s) during certain school subjects, this is likely to weaken the overall nature of the friendship and place it at-risk. For instance, it could reasonably be assumed that destroying a friend's tasks and antagonising them during mathematics time like Ian regularly did would contribute to a more fragile friendship than one in which his behaviour was more predictable across all settings.

Thus, while equal status relationships are an essential requisite to inclusion, so too are children's skills in maintaining, repairing and terminating relationships and gaining and allowing entry to new partners or groups. To increase the likelihood of children being able to develop more mature forms of inclusion, such skills need to be present in at least one member of a dyad or group. Since children with DS and other intellectual impairments are generally less skilled communication partners (Harry, Day & Quist, 1998; Sinson, 1988; von Tetzchner & Jensen, 1999) as well as members of a devalued minority group (Pueschel, 1992), this inevitably places a greater responsibility on peers for addressing the imbalance of power. In the absence of such skills and the absence of a responsive social context in which they might be acquired,

children with DS or other differences can easily be locked into static, stereotypical, inferior roles and so be deprived of gaining access to the explicit content of the school curriculum.

Quite often, breakdowns occurred during the less-intimate forms of inclusion such as occasional playmate or task partner. Since, in these roles, both participants are engaged in more extensive interpersonal relationships than in the first category (inclusion as politeness), what transpires between participants in these two roles is crucial. Factors contributing to breakdowns during these roles are particularly important to investigate, as these are likely to provide understandings as to why some children do not experience inclusion beyond politeness or occasional playmate into more intimate roles.

Engagement in same status relationships was not sufficient if relationships did not last sufficiently long for children to develop more advanced forms (for example, a child was generally ignored and/or included only in lower forms of inclusion – see Subcategory 3.2.2: i-viii). Furthermore, relationships in which classmates failed to display the kinds of skills necessary for establishing intersubjectivity (joint attention to the same aspect of the situation) or failing to attempt interpreting intent in appropriate contexts were also considered unsatisfactory, given that they could not lead to more intimate forms of inclusion. For example, peers ignored Richard's hiding of his hand, suggesting he did not want his hand held while listening to a story.

Since inclusion involves participation in both more intimate roles as well as less-intimate roles, development of the former may be thwarted if interactions end prematurely or break down before any meaningful goals have been accomplished. Furthermore, unless children develop skills in repairing and maintaining interactions, access to content areas in the curriculum will also be restricted. At the most fundamental level, if children fail to experience 'belonging' as valued classmates, relationships will be dominated by constant struggles to maintain relationships as opposed to meaningful engagement with the curriculum and its underlying values (Simpson & Galbo, 1986). The next two examples illustrate this issue. In the first example, Ian gains access to a culturally valued activity (literacy) through which he can share, maintain and develop his literacy-based attitudes and competencies.

Access is easily obtained as he is already viewed as a valuable class member and is part of a particular peer group, which includes the classmate in the example.

In the school library, the teacher asks Elliot to help Ian find a book. The pair walks to the shelf together. Ian selects a book with a dinosaur on it and hands it to Elliot. Both smile at each other. The teacher asks the boys to look at it together. They sit next to each other with the book in the middle, pointing to the various pictures and smiling and laughing about the content as they do so. Isolated words (Ian) and phrases/sentences (Elliot) are exchanged, although apart from the words 'dinosaur', I cannot get close enough to hear the content. Later on Ian takes out the library card and fiddles with it. Elliot says to him, "It stays there." and helps him put it back. Elliot refocuses the interaction on the book's content and they continue sharing the book.

The episode includes many examples of joint attention (for example, Ian and Elliot both smiling at Ian's choice of book, smiling and laughter during the sharing of the content). When Ian shifts his focus to something less related to the content (the library card in the pocket on the back cover), Elliot establishes shared meaning with Ian by providing the necessary information ("It stays in there."), supporting Ian in returning it and refocusing on the book content. Throughout the episode, Ian gains access to culturally valued literacy skills while Elliot receives opportunities for including someone who engages in limited expressive language and more unconventional behaviour, but at the same time, shares his interest in dinosaurs.

In the next example, Jonathan is denied access to similar literacy-based interactions, as his classmates do not display skills involving the repair of potential breakdowns. As in the previous example, Jonathan's class are similarly assigned to read a book in the book corner quietly. Children do so in pairs or in small groups although there are a few including Jonathan who are not part of a group or with a partner.

Instead of sitting on the mat, Jonathan sits on the teacher's chair and 'reads' the big blown-up book, which the teacher read to the class earlier in the day. Michael says to George, "Jonathan's not sitting on the mat. He's sitting on the teacher's chair." Michael then says to Jonathan, "You're not allowed to sit on the teacher's chair. You're not allowed to read that" (blown-up book). When finished, Jonathan picks up a regular size book, one, which was lying on the floor in between him and Hamish. Apparently, Hamish had claimed this book (although this was not obvious), as he had actually selected and was reading another book. Hamish says to Michael, "Jonathan took my book off me." Hamish tries to take the book from Jonathan. Jonathan resists.

Unlike the interaction between Ian and Elliot where almost the entire interaction focused on the task and shared valuing of the literary value of books, there was no such talk about any content or engagement in the literacy value of the activities. Instead, the interaction is consumed by the nature of the relationship (Jonathan's deviancy) which they use to separate him from them. Peers use Jonathan's unconventional but not inappropriate behaviour as a basis for adopting a superior position to him, instead of establishing shared meanings concerning the nature of the task.

### 3.3.1: Peer Processes Affecting Inclusion

This section describes the kinds of factors affecting inclusion that were identified in the data. Some of these factors contributed to an immediate breakdown in relationships, others were more likely to hinder more meaningful and mature forms of inclusion from occurring over time, whilst some were likely to impact on both issues. The first three processes (reciprocity, failure to adequately to interpret behaviour, misunderstandings/lack of tolerance: repairing of breakdowns) are inter-related and pertain to the management of relationships. Without these processes occurring fluently, it is difficult for children to establish the kinds of relationships in which they can view each other's authentic contributions, necessary for the possibility of more intimate relationships (Reidy, 1993; Schwier, 1993). The fourth process (difficulties in role as co-worker on academic tasks) concerns the impact of the three previously identified processes for children's inclusion as partners or group members in school tasks. The fifth process (tolerance for unconventional behaviour) relates to interpretation and subsequent responses to unconventional behaviour, whilst not in an immediate interpersonal situation with the child (for example, the child enters the wrong classroom or wanders off the line to class to play on the playground). The final two processes highlight factors related to the context (role conflict) and within-child factors (more specifically a child regularly excluding himself from 'benign' social interactions).

## *(i) Reciprocity*

### *(a) Immediate reciprocity*

A precondition for the possibility of friendships and inclusion as effective task partners was for there to be reciprocity or some kind of common ground in the relationship. Being included as an effective group member involves not only receiving, but also contributing (Bogdan & Taylor, 1987; Lutfiyya, 1990; Taylor & Racino, 1991).

There were incidents that started off on an equal footing. For example, a boy at kindergarten pulled Ian on a trolley around the track but the interaction ceased when Ian did not reciprocate. Ian seemed to lack awareness that a reciprocal behaviour could have prolonged the interaction. Likewise, the peer seemed unaware of Ian's potential ability to reciprocate the favour, or to maximise the opportunity of this happening, for instance, by being more explicit. At the same time, the nearby teacher focused on the peer's willingness to accommodate Ian, but not vice versa. Consequently, the boy wandered off and Ian remained seated on the trolley presumably waiting for someone else to give him a ride.

While it is not necessary that reciprocity occur for both/all members of a dyad or group in the same interaction, over a period of time a person should not be mainly on the receiving end of support or only contributing to relationships. The following incident illustrates the way reciprocal relations contribute to inclusion.

Ian and friends (Brendan, Philip and Alex) are playing soccer. Ian is looking for the ball and says to himself, "Where's the ball gone?" Brendan finds it and gives it to him saying, "There Ian." Ian smiles at Brendan, then kicks it. Brendan gets it and kicks it back. Ian says, "Wow!" in response to Brendan's kick. Brendan, Philip, Alex and Ian all chase the ball, laughing as they do so. Philip has just about got the ball. Ian calls out to him enthusiastically, "Philip, get it! Get the ball!" All chase it.

In this incident, Ian engages in behaviours that are reinforcing to his peers. He praises their efforts, he acknowledges Brendan's contribution (giving him the ball when he was looking in the wrong place), he joins in the spirit of the game (laughs with the group and stays within the parameters of the group). His peers are also reinforcing by acknowledging his problem (searching for the ball), not demeaning his efforts at



finding the ball (searching in the wrong place), and kicking the ball to him. While they did not overtly praise his efforts during this excerpt, they regularly did so on other occasions, for instance, Philip-Ian, "Ian, Hey, Ian. What a jolly good kick!"

In contrast, the following example illustrates how Richard's peers failed to see him as an individual, but responded to him as an object to control.

Richard is silent reading and vocalises about the pictures in his book. Louise who is sitting next to him starts turning the pages of his book for him. Richard says, "No." several times. Eventually she stops turning over his pages. She then shuts his book, takes it away and gives him another...Some older children enter. Two older boys sit next to Richard. Richard gets excited about his book and points out and says, "snake!" The boys do not appear to notice. One boy says to the other, "I'll look after Richard today." The second boy says, "No. Just leave him."

Richard's real and potential contributions are ignored in favour of helping-type interactions, which are not contingent on his responses, hence there is minimal reciprocity. Because his peers assigned Richard the role of object and took control of Richard's behaviour, they provided few opportunities for him to contribute. This affected getting to know him as an individual and the establishment of common ground necessary for the development of more intimate forms of inclusion. Consequently, Richard was at-risk of being 'discarded' whenever his peers decided that they had had enough of him. However, while reciprocity is an important precondition for more intimate forms of inclusion, it is insufficient on its own without attention to the context in which it occurs. In some situations where teachers structured an activity to facilitate inclusion and the resulting interactions involved reciprocal, mutually satisfying encounters, there were instances where the relationship could not (and did not) evolve as other critical elements were lacking.

On one such occasion, Mark's teacher asked a girl (who was possibly in the class next door) to join Mark in a game of ball. The girl quickly adapted the ball game to an appropriate level commensurate with Mark's interest and abilities and the pair played together briefly rolling the ball to one another. It was one of the few occasions Mark actively contributed to the activity and he was an enthusiastic and rewarding participant as evidenced by his smiling at the girl, responding to her comments,

complying with the demands of and staying with the activity. However, when the girl left the game, Mark was unable to recreate the scenario, as the conditions necessary for an ongoing relationship were absent. Mark was never introduced to the girl, nor did he know which classroom she belonged to.

On the girl's departure, Mark remained seated with his head hung low while pointing to the ground where the girl had been sitting saying, "There" repeatedly as if he were saying, 'Come back, sit there and play this game with me again'. Since he 'belonged' to a different class, he would be unlikely to encounter this girl again easily. Also since Mark's teacher who had organised the partnership was no longer present and the duty teacher ignored Mark's non-verbal communication, only commenting on his "nice warm gloves", Mark remained in this powerless position until the conclusion of the lunch hour.

This incident illustrates how proximity and frequency of contact with potential co-workers, acquaintances, playmates and friends (not random activities with unknown children) are as important a part of the equation for reciprocity if children are to have access to one another without dependence on adults. Other studies concerning friendships involving people with and without impairments support this principle (Biklen, 1985; Bishop, Jubala, Stainback & Stainback, 1996; Lutfiyya, 1990; McArthur & Morton, 1999).

### ***(b) Reciprocity over time***

Being perceived as making a valid contribution in the variety of different same status roles seemed to be related to classmates supporting the child in the face of adversity. When a child was in a context in which he could display authentic characteristics, which his peers could relate to, his classmates supported him. This was particularly evident in Ian's classroom. While Ian regularly engaged in unconventional behaviour in the various roles he played, his classmates (not only his friends) seemed to understand his behaviour and interpret it positively. For example, at morning tea time, while Ian's peers brought their own snacks including highly-valued chips, Ian was always willing to share his chips. The children commented to one another about Ian's sharing which clearly they admired. Despite Ian not performing the actions of various folk dances correctly, he was a sought out partner because as his teacher described, "He's so joyful about it." Children noticed his compassion and went to him when distressed. His more immature way of jumping instead of hopping on the hopscotch became another viable way of playing hopscotch. His closest friends

sought him out for sitting with at lunchtime and playing soccer with afterwards. Thus, being viewed as making valid contributions in a variety of roles seemed to result not only in reciprocal interaction at the time, but also at other times when he was in strife such as when older children took his ball away.

*(ii) Failure to adequately interpret behaviour*

Where peers were unable or unwilling to interpret each other's behaviours, breakdowns in interactions could occur. The ability to assess the meaning of one's behaviour for peers and modify it affected whether or not relationships could be sustained, (even when the behaviours were anti-social). In the following scenario, both participants are clearly interpreting the game as enjoyable, therefore Jacob's teasing was not an issue for either party.

Jacob and another male peer tease and chase a group of girls with Barbie dolls. While the girls squeal, complain and run away, they clearly enjoy the teasing as they seek Jacob out and entice him into further teasing and chasing.

However, when the two parties did not attach the same meaning to the teasing and the child being teased found the teasing upsetting or offensive (evident from verbal and/or non-verbal behaviour), the interaction is an exclusive or demeaning one.

Mark is in the playground standing and looking around. Three boys come up to him and say hello to him over and over again and laugh at him. One of the boys throws his screwed-up lunch paper at his face. Mark looks at the ground and shakes his head (He clearly does not enjoy the interaction). The boys continue...

In contrast to the first example involving Jacob, in which the two parties adopted equal roles in relation to the teasing, the role Mark was assigned in this scenario was an unequal (and excluded) one. He lacked the ability to get out of the assigned role (victim) hence the likelihood of more intimate forms of inclusion occurring with these boys after this episode would be negligible.

There were other instances where a child with DS did not resist being assigned a demeaning role and in fact, appeared to enjoy and encourage participation in it. For example, during one of Ian's first days of school, children patted his face and laughed with him. While Ian may have interpreted this experience as having friends, his

peers' behaviour placed him in the role of an object, even if they or he did not realise it. Giving mutual consent is therefore insufficient to ensure inclusion.

***(iii) Misunderstandings/lack of tolerance: repairing of breakdowns***

Interactions involving unconventional behaviour could result in exclusion, inclusion into inferior roles or in some contexts, a level of acceptance, with some shared understandings with the child and inclusion as an equal.

The following incident illustrates how one peer's hostile reaction (based on his inability to interpret the intent of the behaviour) to an infringement of a cultural norm (touching another's clothing) resulted in the recipient being placed in a demeaning role (unequal status relationship).

Five children at kindergarten including Jonathan and Matthew (peer) are standing in a line, taking turns at bowling over skittles under the guidance of a teacher. The children are wearing jackets and Matthew who is standing next to Jonathan is wearing a bright, fancy jacket with zips both inside and out. As Jonathan is waiting for his turn in the game, he lifts one of the sides of Matthew's jacket and looks at the inside zip pocket. Matthew loudly and angrily says to Jonathan, "Don't!" and looks at him angrily (placing Jonathan in a rejecting role). Jonathan looks down.

Given Matthew's lack of awareness of Jonathan's likely intent (early exploratory behaviour – looking at the inside lining/pocket/zip), and Jonathan's inability to explain his motive and/or recognise his infringement and apologise, the interaction breaks down. Jonathan is unlikely to want to interact with Matthew again because not understanding how his behaviour affected Matthew, he will probably remember the anger and interpret this to mean more generally that Matthew does not like him. Matthew also, will be unlikely to seek Jonathan out, as he will remember him as engaging in odd behaviour. Thus, when there is no shared meaning, such as in this incident, the children only have their own interpretations of each other's messages (Matthew's angry tone and Jonathan's 'weird' behaviour) to assess whether or not they wish to engage in future interactions.

The effects of a different response from another peer to Jonathan engaging in similar behaviour on the same day in the same setting illustrates how a potential breakdown was mitigated by this boy's ability to develop a shared understanding of the issue.

Jonathan puts on David's very distinctive felt hat, which he had left on the floor. David notices Jonathan wearing it and says gently to Jonathan, "That's my hat, Jonathan." Jonathan hands the hat back, David puts it on and both boys smile at one another.

David who established some meaningful understanding with Jonathan helped retain Jonathan's equal status by providing him with information about the ownership of clothing, in a non-aversive manner. His tone of voice was accepting as he explained that the hat was his personal property. Jonathan seemed to understand the concept of ownership and willingly let the hat go. Unlike the previous interaction with Matthew, this interaction terminated on good terms with the pair smiling at one another.

#### ***(iv) Difficulties in role as co-worker on academic task***

The same issues as in the previous category (lack of tolerance and failure to establish shared meanings) also arose in the context of specified academic tasks. The following example illustrates how Simon initially included Jonathan as an equal participant, in a same status role, but when Jonathan did not respond as an age-mate to the specified question Simon was required to ask, the interaction broke down.

During maths, Simon and Jonathan formed a pair and the task was to make a repeating pattern out of the materials provided, for example, red counter, blue plate, red counter, blue plate. Simon made his pattern as follows: hammer, saw, hammer, saw (about six of each altogether). Jonathan put some counters in a line, but it was not a distinct pattern. Jonathan then looks at Simon's pattern. He then takes out handfuls of counters and places them next to him. Some of the counters almost encroach on Simon's recurring pattern. Simon moves his pattern a little further away from Jonathan. Both boys are now sitting back to back. The teacher instructs the pairs to share their patterns with each other. Simon follows the instruction and says to Jonathan, "Look at your pattern, Jonathan." Jonathan's attention is not on his 'pattern.' He is exploring the boxes of maths equipment and does not respond to Simon. Simon then reads his own pattern aloud and then called out to the teacher, "Look at my pattern!"

Simon did not know how to respond when Jonathan's array of counters did not constitute a pattern and he did not attend to the instruction. Consequently, he excluded Jonathan from the interaction. When Jonathan subsequently started using other mathematics materials (plastic hammers and cups) in an imaginative way, other boys supported Simon in his exclusion of Jonathan by hitting him and telling him that he was a naughty boy.

Since this episode occurred in Jonathan's first week of school, he may not have understood that unlike kindergarten, equipment was to be used for specific task requirements instead of for exploration and creative use. Simon and Jonathan therefore did not appear to share the same understanding of the teacher's instruction.

*(v) Tolerance for unconventional behaviour (not impacting on others)*

There were instances where children (mostly those with DS, but not exclusively) engaged in non-interactive tasks or behaviours in ways different to the expectations for that class. Peers sometimes used these occasions for excluding the child or including him into inferior roles. If children with impairments (and other differences) are to experience inclusion, children need to learn to distinguish between unconventional behaviours which may be unfamiliar, but are generally harmless and in the overall spirit of what is required from those that are destructive, offensive, hurtful or potentially unsafe. Examples of the former include reading name cards instead of a book, reading on the teacher's chair instead of the mat while the latter category may include running out of class, hitting and taking personal property. There needs to be a tolerance/acceptance of the former kinds of behaviours if relationships are to proceed and develop, so that children establish shared meanings around the central aspects of tasks and not the more mundane and trivial aspects. This does not mean that children must accept or tolerate behaviours they find aversive, but they do need to learn respectful ways of responding. They need to learn that behaviour does not constitute the whole person. In the following example Susan attends to a potentially unsafe behaviour (going outside in inclement weather). She gives Ian a valid explanation in a respectful way, then includes him in a socially valued activity.

On a very wet day, Ian attempts to go outside during morning tea time. Susan notices and says to him respectfully, "No Ian. It's raining. Look." Ian responds, turns around and replies, "Yeah, rain." Both sit next to one another on the couch while they eat their morning tea and watch the rain. Others join in sitting on either side of them.

This was in marked contrast to Jonathan in a similar situation. His classmates saw him go outside and watched him from the window as they commented to one another

about his deviant behaviour.

***(vi) Role conflict***

Children at times, experienced conflict about how to respond to the child's behaviour. An example of such an incident was when the bell had gone after lunch and the expectation was that the children enter their classroom and sit on the mat reading a book.

Some of the children see Jonathan enter the wrong classroom (next door). One child calls out, "We should look for Jonathan." Another child calls out, "No. Let the teachers." Discussion followed concerning whether or not they should check Jonathan's whereabouts.

The conflict for the children stemmed from their difficulty in knowing what role they should pursue. If they pursued the "good, compliant pupil role", they knew that they would not be punished by being in the wrong place at the wrong time. On the other hand, class activities would not be able to resume if one of their classmates was missing. Perhaps also, the children were aware on some level that Jonathan was more likely to make mistakes such as entering the wrong room and that since he was a member of their classroom, they should support him.

Overall, this difficulty seemed to arise because in this school, children were primarily assigned one role (compliant pupil) irrespective of circumstances. In Ian's school, such conflict did not arise as children were assigned many roles. They were encouraged to think according to the situation instead of fulfil a role regardless of circumstances. For example, a role that was emphasised in Ian's classroom was to support one another. Therefore, when Ian was slower than most at coming back to the line from play, the teacher praised the children for waiting for him and coming back together as opposed to punishing them for not hurrying up since the bell had gone.

***(vii) Child excludes self***

A difficult situation for peers to interpret and respond to was when a child in the study excluded himself. This happened when the classmate was attempting to include the child into various roles, ranging from politeness to potential playmate or when the classmate was merely going about her/his own activity such as eating lunch or doing

schoolwork and the child engaged in anti-social behaviour towards her/him. This inevitably left peers confused as to how to interpret and respond to the behaviour. An example of this occurred when every morning the children from the special and regular classes were asked to form pairs and walk to the developmental room holding hands.

The teacher-aide asks Nicholas to be Mark's partner. Mark remains on the mat, whilst the other children are all lined up by the door. Nicholas physically prompts Mark to go with him, gently taking his hand. Mark resists by hiding his hands away from Nicholas's hand and saying, "No, no, no." Mark gets up and walks away from Nicholas to the back of the line. Nicholas tries to hold his jersey as Mark refuses to let Nicholas hold his hand. ... Mark says "No, no, no" pushing away Nicholas' hand. Nicholas to Mark, "I'm your friend. I'm not going to hurt you." Teacher-Aide to Nicholas, "Nicholas, just go on and leave him. He'll follow you." Mark does, but dawdles and is well behind the others. When he gets inside the building, he engages in behaviour, which is likely to exacerbate his isolation. He lies on the floor facing the wrong way instead of sitting up, he pushes the child behind him twice and he hits Nicholas before crawling away and sitting on the periphery of the group.

It is not known why Mark engaged in such isolating behaviour on this and most other occasions requiring him to participate in an activity with or without others. His pronounced refusal to co-operate and engage in anti-social behaviours prevented him from gaining access to the kinds of relationships conducive to enhanced social and academic development. While previously, it has been stated that the choices of children with impairments need to be respected to avoid their inclusion in demeaning roles, when the choice to self-exclude hinders meaningful outcomes as in the present example, such choices cannot be considered acceptable and some adult intervention would appear necessary.

#### ***(viii) Cultural differences in roles***

Children arrive at preschools and schools with different interaction styles reflecting the cultures of their families. These styles may be aggressive, polite, teasing or non-verbal and work effectively in their respective family environments. A style of interaction which is not explicit in terms of the message's intention may be effective with others who share a similar style, but it is more likely to convey exclusion or inclusion into an inferior role to a child who cannot interpret the intended meaning. The following episode illustrates how Jonathan interpreted the comment, "Don't



touch” as exclusion from the activity, not just the particular group at the activity, regardless of whether this was the intention.

Jonathan enters the mechanical corner at kindergarten where children are free to dismantle old equipment such as typewriters. There are three typewriters available, of which two are occupied, one by a girl and the other jointly by Andrew and David. Jonathan joins the two boys and starts touching parts on ‘their’ typewriter with a screwdriver. Andrew calls out to Jonathan, “Don’t touch, Jonathan. We’ve got some work to do.”

In response to Andrew’s request not to touch ‘his’ typewriter, Jonathan moved to the next typewriter, which the girl was using. She says to him, “Excuse me Jonathan. I’m doing this one.” While Jonathan stopped touching ‘her’ typewriter, he stayed looking at her work. David who was working with Andrew then said to Jonathan, “You can do the other one (the spare typewriter) as he points at it. This comment resulted in Jonathan utilising the spare typewriter.

The last utterance provided Jonathan with the information he needed to know in order to be included in that activity. Even if he was not welcome in the role of co-worker or playmate, he was welcome in the activity as a fellow-classmate. While Jonathan may have read Andrew and the girl’s comments as exclusion from the activity, this was clearly not their intent. These incidents suggest that how messages are interpreted by the receiver is more critical in terms of further inclusion than the sender’s intention. They also highlight the need for preschools and schools to establish norms for how to interact in their particular setting, so that all children are more likely to acquire ways of interacting, which are facilitative of inclusion.

#### Summary (Processes affecting inclusion)

Seven processes have been identified from the data as affecting inclusion into same status roles. While inclusion in same status relationships is essential for long-term benefits to accrue such as participation in the full range of roles typical for that age group and setting, engagement in same status roles on its own is insufficient. If children participate in same status relationships, but these relationships constantly break down, children with impairments and their peers will not be able to engage in the full range of roles necessary for maximum social and academic gains. Thus, the ability to repair relationships is necessary for the full benefits of inclusion to accrue to

all participants. Behaviour cannot be seen in isolation, but must be viewed according to how both participants view it. Inclusion is not necessarily about being “nice” to one another all of the time, but engaging in the kinds of interactions which are typical for the age-group, setting, and task. However, at the same time, both participants must agree to the roles performed if behaviour is to be classified as “inclusive” and the behaviour must be respectful for the culture and age group. Anti-social behaviours such as teasing and fighting can be “inclusive” if both parties are agreeable and the behaviour is not demeaning to one participant, despite consent. A particular style of interaction may be perceived as exclusion, although the sender may not have intended it as such. This suggests that for children to actually experience “inclusion” in whatever role, peers need to engage in interactions in which their intentions are clearly explicit, or in which they both share the same understanding. All forms of self-exclusion are not equal. Where children regularly opt out of benign peer relationships, they may be limiting their opportunities for enhanced social and academic development. Therefore, the basis of self-exclusion needs to be examined when investigating the nature of inclusion. Reciprocity needs to be evident in most episodes of social interaction, although another kind of reciprocity (over time) has also been identified. This involves ascertaining whether overall one person tends to be on the receiving end of others’ contributions or whether both contribute, albeit in different ways and at different times. Children seemed more likely to experience conflict about including a class member when they were generally assigned one specific role to perform such as obedient pupil than when the parameters of their roles were more flexible. This supports the contention that contextual factors play a significant role in inclusion. The identification of recurring patterns of inclusion over time as opposed to isolated episodes was deemed essential given that effective friendships and work partners may not develop instantly, but when they do, they need maintenance for optimal development. Finally, experiencing the full range of roles on an ongoing basis is essential for children with and without identifiable impairments for optimal social and academic benefits. While the actual nature of the dyad or peer group may change, which is likely to occur during the early years (Ramsay, 1991; Schwier, 1993), inclusion needs to be ongoing. Therefore, connections at all levels should be present not only at the beginning of a child’s entry when novelty and interest in the newcomer may be higher, but throughout her/his enrolment in that setting. The essential ingredient is whether children still have the same range of

diverse roles to play, regardless of the actual composition of the dyad or group. Therefore, for facilitative inclusion, children need to be included in the range of identified same-status roles in an ongoing manner.

### **3.4: Summary of Chapter Three**

In this chapter, I have identified several processes, which occur when children with and without DS are placed into groups in different contexts throughout the school day. These contexts involved less structured parts of the day when the children were largely free to interact with one another and more structured times when the teacher specified particular partners or groups for the child in which to undertake a specific task(s). In all of these contexts however, the teacher did not supervise the activity, even if she structured the pairs or groups at the beginning.

In both these contexts, there were forms of inclusion, which were not developmentally enhancing or meaningful (inferior forms of inclusion). Peers assigning the child an inferior status role was characteristic of these episodes. At the same time, there were other more appropriate forms of inclusion where all participants shared equal status roles. In the child-initiated contexts, there were also various forms of exclusion ranging from ignoring to more active forms of exclusion, such as spitting and verbal abuse.

However, even within the more meaningful forms of inclusion where participants shared equal status, issues arose, which interfered with the potential benefits of some experiences, and participation in more intimate forms of inclusion. These processes concerned mostly the management of relationships and involved issues relating to their maintenance and repairing. More specifically, they involved:

- i) failure to demonstrate reciprocity in one party and failure to establish it in the other,
- ii) ability/inability to interpret one another's behaviours,
- iii) ability/inability to repair breakdowns in relationships,
- iv) tolerance or lack of tolerance for unconventional behaviour in interpersonal interaction and v) in non-social contexts,
- vi) all of the above in tasks requiring the child as co-worker
- vii) issues related to role conflict.

There were other factors that affected the development of the above processes. If children used particular cultural styles of interacting, which were more implicit than explicit, the risk of being misinterpreted by the receiver was higher. Role conflict also occurred when children could interpret a child's behaviour, but did not know how to respond for fear of the teacher's reaction. A difficult task for classmates was to accurately interpret and respond in an inclusive way to children excluding themselves.

In view of the different kinds of inclusion and exclusion operating and the kinds of processes identified which act as barriers to inclusion, the aim of the next chapter is to identify the kinds of inclusion operating for each of the participants in their respective preschools and schools.

## CHAPTER 4: HOW THE CHILDREN EXPERIENCED INCLUSION

### Part I

#### Overview of data

An important aim of this chapter is to ascertain how settings affect inclusion by comparing the children's experiences of inclusion and exclusion in their preschools and schools. When the children in the study left preschool to start school, they encountered numerous changes in their educational contexts, which affected the nature of tasks they engaged in and their roles and relationships. In turn, these changes had implications for their inclusion into a peer group(s) or dyad(s). Unlike school, where children are in more confined spaces for longer periods of time and regularly engaged in teacher-specified activities, the less formal preschool setting offered children opportunities for making their own decisions about how they spent their time. This could result in a disproportionate amount of time being spent in one type of activity or form of interaction (social or otherwise) to the exclusion of balanced learning experiences. The preschool teacher's role is to respond to the child's initiatives by offering guidance regardless of whether he/she chooses activities with or without other children. The extent to which children are included in dyads or peer groups is largely left up to them.

While the free-choice programme may fulfil the needs of the majority of typically developing children, the available social and other opportunities may not be sufficient for children with DS to derive optimal benefits. Their developmental and motivational differences may deny them access to valuable social experiences. These children are likely to have difficulty in both interpreting and signalling social cues accurately. Other presenting difficulties may include problems with simultaneously maintaining joint attention to an activity and social partner, less spontaneity in initiating social interactions and a more limited knowledge of social conventions, all of which are affected to some extent by the kind of differences in perception and cognition outlined in Chapter 1. When children are included as an equal, the relationship may break down before a successful conclusion to the interaction is reached. Furthermore, when

teachers hold the developmental or readiness perspective that has been the dominant model of viewing learning in New Zealand preschools (Jordan, 1998), they are less likely to intervene by facilitating membership of peer groups or friendships. If this is so, then despite the potentially rich opportunities for inclusion, such informal contexts may actually limit these children's opportunities for being included. Some children including those with DS are thus more vulnerable to the effects of not only peers' misinterpretations of them, but also the effects of broader contextual restraints, such as teachers not expecting peer group involvement due to an individual's developmental level.

More intimate relationships generally occur when children see similarities between another and themselves. Typically developing children may see no similarities with a child with DS whose appearance and behaviour appear unfamiliar. When they are not rewarded by a conventional or expected response, they may lack the motivation to invest time and energy in pursuing interacting with the child. The school setting where group work is expected and the teacher provides more structure could be more conducive to inclusion. The responsibility for getting involved is not left entirely up to the child. Requiring children to work with one another may promote the kinds of opportunities necessary for children with and without impairments to learn how to interact and include one another effectively. On the other hand, if children are already wary of a particular child, more encounters with her/him may exacerbate existing negative beliefs about her/him and contribute to exclusion or inclusion into inferior roles.

Teachers' practices are shaped by their settings (preschool or school) and their beliefs and the expectations of their own roles. For example, children's inclusion and exclusion will be affected by the teacher's perceptions of their roles: whether or not they perceive attending to children's social development as part of their role and whether or not they possess the skills to facilitate effective inclusion. Their understandings of DS and disability and their beliefs about the purpose(s) of the child's inclusion are further significant factors. In sum, inclusion is affected by biological factors (DS where present), other characteristics of the child, and contextual factors such as setting, peer and teacher behaviour. The prime focus in this chapter is

the nature of the children’s experiences with their peers. The impact of teachers and the wider context are presented separately in the next chapter. The following series of tables provide an overview of how the processes of inclusion worked out for each of the children in the study. These tables are referred to throughout the chapter and are presented at the beginning for ease of referral. Table 6 shows the effects of the institution on how the processes of inclusion and exclusion worked out for each child. Included is the nature of inclusion/exclusion one term after each child’s entry to school. Table 7 outlines salient aspects of the child’s contribution to these processes and Tables 8 and 9 outline peer responses to the child’s institutional rule-breaking and engagement in unconventional behaviours. These tables thus present different facets of the inclusion/exclusion process. Following discussion of the data in these tables, individual case studies of each child (Part II) are presented to expand the information in the tables and illustrate how the interactive nature of the processes worked for each particular child.

**4.1: Effects of Institutional Context on Inclusion**

Since transition to school is about a process of change from one educational setting to another, it seemed pertinent to begin by identifying what effect this change had on the children’s inclusion. Table 6 shows the patterns of same-status inclusion experienced by each child during three different data collection points: the last week of preschool, during the first month of school and approximately three months after school entry. This table provides a background to the more detailed individual case studies.

The categories in Table 6 are expanded versions of the categories presented in Section 3.2.3 of the previous chapter. Included are specific examples of all the different types of interactions characterising each of the two levels of inclusion. For a “Y” (yes) to be recorded in the table, a child had to have experienced at least one incident or longer episode (unless otherwise stated in the definitions) reflecting that particular category during the stated observation period. The experience had to be with a classmate<sup>1</sup> and child-initiated, not facilitated by a teacher or other adult.

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<sup>1</sup> Mark participated in four different classes each day. Classmates from any of these classes could facilitate this criteria.

Table 6. Type of Inclusion and Categories Representing each Type Experienced by each of the Children, during Preschool, First Month of School and Approximately One Term (12-16 weeks) after School Entry

Category	Child's Name																	
	Ian			Jacob			Mark			Jonathan			Neil			Richard		
	Placement or Stage of Entry																	
	Preschool	School entry	One term later	Preschool	School entry	One term later	Preschool	School entry	One term later	Preschool	School entry	One term later	Preschool	School entry	One term later	Preschool	School entry	One term later
Level 1 Inclusion:																		
Pleasantries	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	a	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	a	Y	a
Brief episodes of physical play	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	a	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	a	Y	a
Fleeting incidents	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	a	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	a	Y	a
Invite by non-specific peer	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	a	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	a	Y	a
Episodes of reciprocal same-status interactions (Playmate)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	a	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	a	N	a
Level 2 Inclusion: Same status relationships																		
Sought out by specific children	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	a	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	a	N	a
Sits with specific peers at lunch	na	Y	Y	na	Y/N	Y	na	N	N	na	N	N	na	Y/N	Y	na	N	a
Peers call child by nickname	N	Y	Y	#	#	#	a	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	#	#	#
Discussion about going to one another's homes	N	N*	N*	Y	Y	Y	a	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	a	N	a
Whispering with specific children	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	a	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	a	N	a
Recurring episodes of play with same/similar group	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	a	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	a	N	a
Specific peer or group repair relationships	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	a	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	a	N	a
Selected as partner	na	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	a	N	N	na	N	N	na	Y	Y	na	Y	a
Tolerance / respect	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	a	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	a	Y	a
Advocacy for child	N	Y	Y	**	Y	**	a	N	N	N	N	N	**	Y	**	a	Y	a
Observations and interviews reflect mutual liking (friend)	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	a	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	a	N	a

\* Invitations to peers' homes do occur: \*\* Unable to tell from data as no adverse situations occurred:

# Real name does not lend itself to nickname or abbreviation: 'a' No observations: na Not applicable



For the three children (Jacob, Mark and Jonathan), there were no significant fluctuations in their experiences in that they were either included or excluded in both settings, for Ian and Neil, there were major differences (in different directions). These changes are vitally important for understanding the nature of their experiences. However, since these fluctuations could not be adequately portrayed, they are not visible in Table 6. For a complete understanding of these and other processes, the reader is reminded that the table is merely a guide, with the text providing the essential details.

#### 4.1.2: Levels 1 and 2 Inclusion: Distinction

The categories representing level 1 inclusion are expanded versions of those identified in the previous chapter concerning ‘inclusion as same status members’ (see 3.2.3). Despite some lengthy interactions, the first five categories in Table 6 represent peer interactions in which the participants do not share any deeper versus superficial connections. Level 2 inclusion involved being included as a valued member of the class on a consistent basis, by at least some members. Children who considered themselves friends were more likely to experience a greater range of the interactions characterising level 2 inclusion, but the situation also arose where a child who was perceived as having valued skills or traits experienced some level 2 interactions. For instance, Neil who did not experience specific friendships on school entry was included as a valued classroom member. He was advocated for, selected as a partner for academic tasks and was treated with dignity and respect when he engaged in unconventional or more immature behaviour.

The following definitions were used for each category:

**Pleasantries:** Greetings, brief comments about here and now events or activities. For example, Philip - Ian, “Look, it’s raining hard.” Ian - Philip, “Yeah.” Both participants must be involved in the interaction even if not verbally.

**Brief episodes of physical play:** For instance, chasing, riding scooter with another child each alternating at following and leading (up to 2-3 minutes). Does not

necessarily involve verbal interchange, but must involve joint participation, not parallel play.

**Fleeting incidents:** Child and random peer engage in interaction consisting of one or two interchanges. For example, Ian is playing with a jack-in-the-box. Paul requests, "Let me see." Ian shows him. Paul has a brief look, then returns it to Ian before leaving.

**Invitation by non-specific peer:** Direct request for inclusion. For example, Matthew - Jonathan, "Come on Jonathan. It's morning tea time." The request must be audible, but whether or not child responds or engages in the invitation is immaterial.

**Episodes of social interaction:** These involved interactions of more than two interchanges and with peers who were not regularly seen with the focal child. Usually, the child and peer were interacting together for the observed episode only.

**Child is sought out by specific child(ren) for mutually reciprocal activity:** This category consisted of peers waiting for/with child until he was ready, mutual seeking one another out throughout the day for at least 2-3 days, talking about and agreeing to engage in a joint activity.

**Sits with specific peers at lunch:** This involved seeking out specific children, not sitting beside children at random. The relationship between the child and peer(s) had to be reciprocal in that both chose to sit next to one another.

**Peers call child by nickname:** Since calling someone by a respectful nickname denotes familiarity, this was seen as an outcome of belonging as a valued participant. The name was not to be derogatory or babyish.

**Discussion about going to one another's homes:** Any mentions of going to one another's homes, regardless of whether visits actually took place

**Whispering with specific children:** Like nicknames and talking about visiting one another's homes, whispering also indicated a special rather than random relationship. For this to be so, the whispering had to be reciprocal. That is, both had to be engaged in the activity either as listener or speaker.

**Recurring episodes of play with same/similar group:** For inclusion into this category, children may have moved onto other activities and/or engaged with other children, but they returned regularly to spend time with their special friend or particular peer group over time.

**Selected as partner:** When the teacher requested the selection of a partner, the child was freely chosen, not long after the instruction was given. For example, after the teacher gave the instruction to select a partner, Michael immediately called out, "Jacob, Jacob!" to be his partner.

**Advocacy:** Advocacy involved valuing and understanding the child advocated for, and using this knowledge to bring about a more thoughtful response amongst classmates. For example, Neil had no specific friends during his first month of school, but some children from his playcentre advocated for him when others were openly critical about his lack of knowledge concerning school rules.

**Tolerance/Respect:** Classmates (not necessarily friends) regularly treated the child with dignity and respect when the child engaged in unconventional or more immature behaviours, even though it did not impinge on them directly. For example, Ian attempted to go outside at playtime despite the rain. Susan noticed and went to him saying, "No, Ian. It's raining outside." He looked, then shut the door again, saying, "Oh." Also in this category were examples where peers ignored the more trivial aspects of tasks and connected with the child on more pertinent aspects. For example, ignoring the child sitting 'incorrectly', but initiating talk about a book's content.

**Specific peer or group repair relationships:** This occurred when the child engaged in aversive or unconventional behaviour with a friend or peer group and the friend or

group member utilised skills to enable the interaction to continue and relationship to be sustained. This also involved situations in which the friendships were greater than the usual friendly classroom interactions. It involved the peer using skills necessary for repairing or maintaining the friendship, which was at-risk for termination on account of the child's input. For example, when Ian attempted to take ownership of Alex's block construction (a house), Alex resolved the issue by enabling Ian to build a roof for his own house.

**Observations and interviews reflecting mutual liking (Friend):** In the final category 'friend', children regularly sought one another out and engaged in mutually agreed activities. Both child and his peer(s) also nominated one another as friends during the interviews or in the verbal content of observations. For example, at kindergarten, Jacob says to Kyle,

"You're my friend because you're coming to my house and I'm going to your house, aren't I?" Kyle replies enthusiastically, "Yeah."

#### **4.2: Comparison between Children with DS and Typically Developing Children (see Table 6)**

##### Preschool

At preschool, both the kinds of relationships and hence interactions the boys with DS experienced were more restricted than those of the typically developing boys. That is, Ian and Jonathan were involved in reciprocal, same-status interactions with other children which at times lasted up to 20 minutes, but they never involved specific individuals or a group(s) who sought one another out frequently.

For both Ian and Jonathan, social episodes of this type were the highest level of their social inclusion. From the teacher's accounts, it would seem that Mark (not observed) also experienced no level 2 inclusion. His kindergarten head teacher stated,

"He (Mark) wasn't really at the stage of actually joining in. He wasn't at the stage of co-operative play... he would sit in the sandpit and play beside children – parallel play, just that sort of thing."

Comments by early intervention staff, such as, “He doesn’t communicate readily with peers” (speech therapist) and “Socially, Mark watches his peers in a parallel play situation and will imitate their activities” (itinerant teacher) also suggest that his level of social inclusion at preschool was minimal.

The typically developing boys (Jacob and Neil) were much more likely to participate in a wider range of relationships involving specific peers (levels 1 and 2 inclusion). This suggested that the typically developing children had developed personal connections with other children in their preschools. Throughout the observations, interspersed with engaging in solitary, teacher-led activities or play with children at random, these children repeatedly returned to the same child or group of children.

### Primary School

All the children except Mark experienced the different forms of level 1 inclusion from their starting school until the end of their first term. This did not mean that they were exempt from any exclusion, but that there were some classmates who throughout the observations were pleasant to them and involved them in some mutually reciprocal encounters. Such inclusion suggested a level of tolerance by some peers, but it did not mean that these children were considered valued participants. Being a valued member occurred when children experienced both level 1 and 2 interactions. Mark barely experienced any of the forms characteristic of level 1 inclusion. He was essentially physically present, but largely ignored and this pattern remained consistent throughout his term at school.

Richard experienced a different kind of inclusion at school from the other three boys with DS. While Ian and Jonathan were included in same status mutually reciprocal relationships of the level 1 type, Richard experienced such interactions only as a member with lower status. He was always treated benignly, but the relationships were usually not reciprocal as his peers coerced him into ‘well-meaning’ but inferior status roles (for example, instead of letting him finish the book of his choice, they decided when he had finished it and when he should have another one).

Unlike the preschool data where there was a clear distinction between the children with and without DS in terms of their belonging or not to a dyad or peer group, inclusion at primary school was dependent on the particular classroom and school context. The context changed from the informal child-centered nature of the preschool to a more formal teacher-led curriculum at school, but within those settings, teachers engaged in different practices reflecting different philosophies and beliefs, which clearly affected the quality of peer interaction.

#### **4.3: The Effects of the Setting on the Nature of Inclusion**

##### No changes in inclusion or exclusion

As can be seen in Table 6, three children experienced no major changes in their inclusion (Jacob) or exclusion (Mark and Jonathan) in the two settings or at the beginning or later stages of their schooling. Even though Jacob interacted with children at school different from those at kindergarten, there was never a time he did not belong to a peer group. Mark and Jonathan on the contrary, did not belong to a particular group or dyad at any stage in either setting.

##### No change in exclusion, but change in child and peer behaviour

While there was no change in the level of inclusion for Jonathan, there was a marked negative change in his behaviour (at school and home) and the way peers responded to him not long after school entry. While observations at kindergarten showed him to be considerate of others, interested and focused on a range of tasks, co-operative and not disruptive, at school he engaged in aversive behaviours increasingly more often. Peers mostly passively excluded (ignored) Jonathan at preschool. However, at school they excluded him in a more overt and hostile way. This pattern continued until observations ceased.

##### Changes in exclusion/inclusion

Two children (Neil and Ian) showed marked differences in the way they experienced inclusion and exclusion as they changed educational settings. For Neil, a third major change also took place in the school setting. Neil was included at preschool, but he experienced mostly exclusion and level 1 inclusion on school entry (first month).

However, he experienced level 2 inclusion several weeks after the Christmas holidays (approximately 13 weeks after school entry). Ian on the other hand experienced mostly exclusion and level 1 type inclusion at preschool and immediately on school entry (first few days), yet full inclusion after two weeks, which continued right up until observations ceased at the end of term.

Since Ian had DS and Neil did not, the similarity in their patterns of inclusion (in opposite directions) suggests that what transpired in their school environments (for instance, the pattern of relationships, the kinds of rules and teacher practices) had a greater effect than DS. Ian experienced level 2 inclusion by the end of his first week of school, despite his exclusion at preschool. Neil, a typically developing child who despite employing the same mature social skills he used at preschool, was excluded at school, thus failing to gain entry into the already-existing peer group of boys. Jonathan who attended the same classroom as Neil was mostly ignored at preschool but he experienced the same hostile rejection as Neil at school. However, unlike Neil, his exclusion continued until observations ceased at the end of his first term. These data strongly suggest that the pattern or nature of relationships in each context affected inclusion/exclusion more than the setting (preschool or school) or the presence of DS.

#### **4.4: Rule-breaking and Unconventional Behaviours**

As cognitive psychologists have indicated, children are not passive recipients of their experiences, but play an active role in contributing to their learning and social relationships. When investigating the patterns of interaction between the focal children with DS and their peers, rule-breaking was identified as a consistent factor contributing to their exclusion. This was evident from the observational data on peer's reactions to the behaviour as well as a consistent theme of the interviews. The rule breaking engaged in by the children with DS involved two kinds. There was the obvious anti-social behaviours with peers such as hitting, taking things and not following the expected rules of the setting such as being in the wrong place or performing the activity incorrectly, as well as their failure to display some basic social conventions and everyday rules relating to social interaction and the tasks in the

setting (for example babbling to oneself at lunchtime). These more unconventional behaviours were not harmful or hurtful, but consisted generally of less mature behaviour that was different from what 4-and 5-year-olds expect of their peers. It was behaviour which was peripheral to the main activity or task (Rogoff, 1990). For example, playing with the library card instead of reading the book, reading the book in the wrong place such as on the teacher's chair. It also consisted of behaviour that contravened the usual social rules/expectations for the age-group (for example, including oneself in an activity with a peer without asking her/him, continuing with a strategy or plan which is clearly ineffective). While the behaviour clearly had a purpose for the child, peers often viewed the behaviour as meaning something else (often an anti-social purpose). For example, when Mark refused to hold hands with Kyle to walk to the developmental activities, Kyle interpreted Mark's resistance as Mark's dislike of him. He failed to notice that Mark had not had the opportunity to get to know him, so he could not possibly dislike him and that Mark behaved in this way with all potential partners. There were also incidents where peers expected a particular response from the child but he failed to give one such as a peer inviting the child to join an activity and the child signalling no response.

Rule-breaking was also a feature of one of the typically developing children's behaviour (Jacob), and while this alienated him from many of his classmates, it actually enhanced his belonging amongst his peer group. This was because the behaviour was part of a sub-culture whose members shared the same understandings about engaging in anti-social ways. None of the children with DS had friends who supported their engagement in any of their rule-breaking behaviours.

### Types of Rules Broken

Embedded in the preschool and school running record data were a variety of rules the staff in each setting conveyed to the children. These involved specification of the kinds of behaviours that the children were and were not permitted to engage in. Another form of rules consisted of the kinds of implicit expectations (social conventions) children expected their peers to engage in. They became evident in the data when interactions failed.



The types of rules identified fell into the following three categories:

- (a) Overt institutional rules mainly concerning anti-social behaviour
- (b) Failure to reciprocate when a response is expected
- (c) Engagement in unconventional behaviour.

Institutional rules mostly concerned behaviours to classmates, but also included rules concerning correct location and appropriate use of food and equipment. They were identified by the kinds of messages children received from their teachers when they or others failed to comply with these rules. Failure to reciprocate when a response was conventionally expected was represented by situations where the focal child did not respond to the initiation from a classmate and did not make the connection that some reciprocation was required or expected. Another set of rules concerned the child's failure to use appropriate social conventions or to engage in expected behaviour (behaviour which was familiar or immediately meaningful to typically developing peers). This latter group of rules was classed as unconventional behaviours. Some were related to the child failing to respond in a reciprocal way and others were more related to the particular way the child responded to situations.

The following are the types of rule-breaking behaviours in which all the focal children engaged. The categories were developed by identifying each incident of the child's rule-breaking, no matter how frequent, from the running records, and assigning each incident to a category.

#### 4.4.1: Breaking Overt Institutional Rules concerning Anti-Social Behaviour

- (i) inappropriate physical contact with peers: hitting, kicking, pushing, throwing, splashing (non-accidental), squeezing, being touched when not wanted.
- ii) taking items or instructing peer to take another's item(s)
- (iii) defacing peers' work, clothes or skin
- (iv) intimidating tactics/threatening gestures

(v) engaging in activities incompatible with the specified task, such as moving to another location or staying in the same location but engaging in distracting behaviour, for instance, leaves mat to play in family corner at mat-time, fiddles with peer's clothing while listening to story

(vi) non-compliance with adult request or instruction, for instance, when adult tells child to stop aversive activity or act correctly

(vii) non-compliance with peer's audible requests to terminate offensive behaviour\*

(viii) inappropriate use of food

(ix) disruptive inappropriate use of materials, such as deliberately knocking matching cards off table

(x) blocks access to materials or activity such as hoarding a box of nails at the carpentry bench, preventing access to slide.

(xi) pushes in front of child in line

#### 4.4.2: Failure to Reciprocate

Reciprocation is a significant aspect of ongoing peer interaction. Failure to acknowledge that this is an essential part of social relationships impedes inclusion. The following four incidents exemplify the category 'failure to reciprocate.'

(i) actions such as peer pulls child on trolley, but child does not pull peer

(ii) non-compliance with peers' direct requests to terminate offensive behaviour, such as "Don't splash."

(iii) no response to 'benign' direct, simple question, invite, instruction

(iv) hostile reaction to apparently benign request. For instance, peers asks, “What are you going to build?” Child responds, “No!”

#### 4.4.3: Engagement in Unconventional Behaviour

Unconventional behaviour exhibited by a child can impede meaningful acceptance in a group. Eleven types of unconventional behaviour were noted.

(i) talking to adults more than talking to peers

(ii) persevering with a problem-solving strategy that the child had already seen fail.

For example, opening a lock with the wrong key

(iii) peers have different meanings of the same actions and fail to recognise the others.’

For example, gently touching item on peer’s collage (early exploratory play) to which peer says “Don’t!” (interpreted as intrusive or threatening action), offering dough cakes outside (peers interpret behaviour as rule-breaking, while child sees it as part of the activity).

(iv) peers unfamiliar with behaviour such as babbling instead of talking at news-time

(v) wearing another child’s clothing without permission, touching another’s personal property without permission, for instance, pencil case, lunchbox.

(vi) engaging in peripheral aspects of activity, such as playing with/exploring easel hinge instead of painting on easel

(vii) stereotyped responses such as saying, “No” to many interactions, including benign respectful interactions, objecting loudly to teacher instructions even if child complies eventually

(viii) hitting, pushing, kicking the teacher

(ix) failing to read cues, for instance, tidies up toy/activity when peer has not finished, joins in game without asking, initiates games without seeking approval, uses another's item when child is using it, seeks to go outside when it is raining, or continues filling a bottle though it has no base

(x) speaking too softly for peers to hear, hence message is not heard so peers cannot respond

(xi) scribbling over or throwing away one's art or print-work

#### **4.5: Frequency of Engagement in Rule-breaking Behaviours at Preschool and School**

In order to ascertain whether children's behaviours remained stable or differed as a result of the differing contexts, a frequency count for the breaking of overt institutional rules was undertaken. This could only be done for institutional rule-breaking because the other forms of rule-breaking were more subtle and complex and therefore, could not sensibly be understood in terms of simple frequencies. Once the total range of rule-breaking behaviours was ascertained, the frequency of breaking overt rules was identified for each child in the study at the very beginning of data collection (last week of preschool\*) and at the end (after one term at school). For all the children at preschool except Neil, the data are based on eight hours of observation time. Neil was observed for four and one-half hours whilst he was engaged in a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities. Given his low rate of engagement in anti-social behaviours in any contexts, it is unlikely that the reduced amount of observation time affected his data.

An instance of the described behaviour was counted as a separate incident when the action involved different participants (adults or children), a different action, or the same action with other intervening behaviour. Thus repeatedly throwing crayons at the same person was counted as one incident, but if the child did some drawing, then started throwing again or he threw crayons at a different child, then these were classed as separate incidents. Table 7 presents the specific types and numbers of the first

category (institutional anti-social rule-breaking behaviours) for each child in the two different educational settings (last week of preschool and after a term at school). The behaviours reflecting the other two categories (4.4.2 and 4.4.3) are not presented in tables because there is more subtlety involved in the actions, which precludes meaningful quantification.

Table 7 shows some striking differences in terms of the amount of anti-social behaviours engaged in by three of the boys (Ian, Jacob and Jonathan) in their preschool and school settings. For two of the boys who attended the same preschool and school (Ian and Jacob), their levels of anti-social behaviour decreased markedly after a term of school attendance. For Jonathan, the change was in the opposite direction from one isolated incident during three mornings at preschool to rule breaking being a regular feature of his behavioural repertoire at school. Neil's participation in rule-breaking behaviour was virtually non-existent in both his preschool and school settings. He conformed to what was expected of him and treated his classmates with courtesy and respect, regardless of setting or circumstances. While there was some reduction in the level of Mark's anti-social behaviours, the amount is still marked. Given that the observation hours at the end of term were half of what they were at the beginning, if one made these periods comparable, Mark would still be engaging in offensive behaviour on 40 occasions in nine hours. While this is fewer than 60, which it was on school entry, it is still likely to be a hindrance to the formation of more intimate social relationships as well as a barrier to more advanced forms of learning.

Table 7. Comparison of the Number of Times each Child Engaged in Overt Rule-Breaking Behaviour during the Final Week of Preschool and after 1 Term of Schooling

Category	Ian		Jacob		Mark*		Jon		Neil	
	Preschool	Term at School	Pre-school	Term at school	School Entry#	Term at School	Pre-school	Term at school	Pre-school	Term at School
Anti-social behaviour (physical)	37	1	6	2	16	4	-	4	-	-
Taking, or instructing others to take	13	1	10	-	1	-	-	1	-	-
Defacing peer's possessions	3	-	1	-	4	1	-	-	-	-
Intimidating tactics	-	-	8	2	-	1	-	-	-	-
Engaging in 'wrong' activity	12	-	1	-	+	-	-	19	-	-
Non-compliance with simple instructions	20	-	3	-	19	6	-	6	-	-
Non-compliance with peers' requests* to terminate behaviour	16	-	3	-	3	1	-	5	-	-
Inappropriate use of food	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disruptive inappropriate use of materials	15	-	14	-	17	7	1	2	1	2
Blocks access to materials/activity	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pushes in front of child in line	na	2	na	1	-	-	na	-	na	-
Total	122	4	50	5	60	20	1	37	1	2

\*Requests needed to be specific involving a verb (For example, “Jonathan, sit down at your own desk”), not just mention of one’s name or an indirect comment (For example, “That’s not your desk.”)

# First three days at school (9 hours)

\*\* Follow-up observations (4.5 hours)

+ No opportunity as always had an adult with him

- Dashes indicate no occurrence of the specified behaviour

The data in Table 7 suggest that the changes in child behaviour from one institution to the other are not merely a consequence of educational setting per se. If it were, one would expect any differences in the level of anti-social behaviours to be in the same direction for all the children. However, this was not the case, with two children (Ian and Jacob) showing a marked decrease in the rates of anti-social behaviour, another showing an increase (Jonathan) and no changes for the other two children with one of these children (Mark) continuing to display the same high levels of rule-breaking behaviours after 13 weeks of school as at the beginning. It would seem then that what happens in these contexts, which contributes to these patterns of child behaviour, is of greater significance than the actual institution itself. In other words, neither the informal nature of preschools nor the more formal nature of schools per se can account for these differences in child behaviour. These inter-related factors are described more fully in Part II (individual case studies). At this point, the important issue to note is that either setting has the potential to enhance or minimise the amount of rule-breaking behaviour of children with and without DS. Clearly such behaviour is not an individual or static property of the child, but is shaped by factors occurring in each institution including how peers respond to the child's unconventional behaviour.

#### **4.6: Peer Responses to all Types of Institutional Rule-Breaking and Unconventional Behaviour**

The range of peer responses to all kinds of rule-breaking and unconventional behaviours in each setting over time is presented in Table 8. These included: a) responses to breaking overt institutional rules about behaviours that directly affected other children or the destructive use of materials or food (see 4.4.1), b) responses to failing to reciprocate verbally or behaviourally (see 4.4.2) and c) responses to the focal child engaging in unconventional behaviours. These consisted of behaviours that are essentially harmless, but involved failing to adhere to the setting's usual expectations (see 4.4.3).

Included in this analysis were only those child behaviours that are responded to by a peer or group of peers. There were other incidents where adults may have considered children to be engaging in unconventional behaviours (for example, throwing plates in

the family corner as flying saucers), but there was no overt reaction from peers or teachers and peers often engaged in these behaviours with the focal child. Also excluded were incidents where the teacher dealt with the situation before the peer could respond. For example, Ian pushed in front of Susan in line. Before Susan had the opportunity to respond, the teacher noticed Ian's pushing and said to him, "No pushing in line, Ian." If Susan had responded as well as the teacher, then the incident would have been included. Regardless of number of occurrences, if a particular response occurred at all during the observational period, it was included in Tables 8 and 9.

Sometimes peers used a combination of responses. These did not follow a particular pattern, but peers tried several until they found one that was effective, or they used one the teacher had instructed them to use (for example, reprimanding the child, but on finding it was ineffective, they resorted to engaging in the same anti-social behaviour the child was doing to them, such as throwing stones or moving away from the child). The different combinations of strategies or responses are not reported. Instead Tables 8 and 9 consist of all the different types of responses peers used regardless of the order in which they displayed them.

The different responses fell into two main categories. There were indirect responses which did not involve the child at all, but consisted of a peer commenting to others, or reacting in a way which was not necessarily evident to the child or others (for example, moving away, staring at the child, looking uncomfortable). The second category involved responses that involved the child directly. Some of these were responses that served to exclude the child, such as a peer or group laughing at the child's more immature behaviour or engaging in actions that were verbally or physically hostile towards the child. There were also more inclusive responses that showed a level of tolerance. These included interpreting the child's intentions, providing explanations and ignoring harmless unconventional behaviours. There were also responses that could not be classed as including or excluding, but could have been either depending on the motive of the child, which was not discernible from the data. Also included in this latter category were responses that were neither inclusive or exclusive, but served a different purpose such as preventing the focal child from



damaging one's work or protecting oneself from some aversive behaviour. Table 8 shows the range of indirect spontaneous peer responses to all rule-breaking behaviours, while Table 9 shows the type of peer's direct responses to the child.

The following definitions were used for the categories appearing in Table 8.

#### 4.6.1: Peers' Indirect Responses (to Adults)

***Comments to/alerts teacher, aide or other adult:*** Includes descriptions and interpretations of behaviours only, not evaluations. For example, Carmen says to me, "Look what Jonathan is doing. He doesn't know what to do in the playground 'cos he's only new." May also include comments alluding to own involvement. Such as "I'm going to do looking after him when Suzanne (teacher-aide) is away, so that he can have some company." (Carmen)

***Alerts teacher publicly:*** One or more classmates call out to alert the teacher what the focal child is doing usually during a whole class activity. The teacher does not need to respond for such comments to be included in this category. This also includes non-verbal cues from a child or small group. For example, Ian is looking at the row of coloured pencils on a desk and distributing the lead pencils from the tin while the class is seated on the mat for singing. A group of children stop singing and are looking bewilderedly at Ian.

***Asks teacher or aide about the child's appearance, behaviour or her behaviour with the child:*** For example, "Who's he? What does he look like?"; "Why is he doing it like that?" (jumping on hopscotch instead of hopping).

***Informs teacher-aide about what the child is and is not allowed:*** For example, Simon – Teacher-aide, "He's (Jonathan) not allowed that...That's not allowed...If he breaks it, he'll have to pay for it."

***Negative evaluation of child to adult: May include expression of pride in hostility towards child:*** For example, (i) Simon – Teacher-aide, "He's (Jonathan) a naughty boy." (ii) Sam – Teacher-aide, "I snatched it (ball) off him."

#### 4.6.2: Indirect Responses (to Peers)

***Describes child's behaviour to peer(s):*** Mere description only. May indicate surprise, but no malice evident. For example, "This is what Ian did." (distributed a pencil from the container on each desk). As they put the pencils back in, they laugh/snigger a little to one another.

***Describes child's behaviour to peer(s) in derogatory manner:*** No evaluation, but uses a hostile tone, laughs at or ridicules child publicly. For example, a child left her purse on the mat. When Jonathan sits on the mat for silent reading, he picks up the purse and explores it. Simon calls out to the other children on the mat who are silent reading, "Look at Jonathan playing with the purse!" Simon laughs.

***Negative evaluation to peer(s):*** Judges child's behaviour negatively as opposed to describing it. Examples include: Gerard says to Michael, "Matthew's a pest and so is Jonathan." Neil - Matthew, "He's (Jonathan) a naughty boy, isn't he?"

***Attempts to initiate meeting about child:*** Carmen spends an entire playtime drumming up support from classmates to hold a meeting at her house to discuss the reason for Jonathan's unconventional behaviour.

***Instructs peer to hurt child:*** Peer instructs another peer to hurt the child for engaging in unconventional behaviour, for example, "Hit him. Hit him!" (when Jonathan failed to return his book to the shelf when the teacher requested it)

#### 4.6.3: Peers' Nonverbal Responses

***Protects own property:*** Prevents child taking item, holds on tightly or takes back item such as hat or toy. Peer offers no verbal instruction, comment or explanation.

***Stares at child:*** Includes physically exploring child's face by touching or patting child's cheeks.

***Ignores child – focal child's communication ignored:*** Peer does not interpret intent even when evident and context is appropriate. For example, during a game of indoor

football at lunchtime with a sponge ball (initiated by Jonathan's teacher-aide), two boys took over the game and excluded Jonathan. In an effort to get involved again, Jonathan pointed to himself and said in an audible voice, "Me?" to Gerard who stood opposite him and ready to kick the ball. He seemed to be asking Gerard to kick the ball to him. However, Gerard ignored Jonathan and continued kicking the ball to selected other children.

***Uncomfortable expression/ignores hurtful behaviour:*** This category refers to peers not knowing how to respond to the child's unconventional behaviour impacting on them. They may look awkward, surprised or uncomfortable. For example, while sitting in a circle at 'Newstime', Ian drives the little car he brought along to share over the child next to him. She cringes and does not seem to know where to look or what to do. Also involves peers ignoring the child's hurtful, destructive or aversive actions, such as being kicked, hit or having one's property interfered with.

***Moves Away:*** This behaviour always occurred after the child engaged in aversive behaviours to the peer and usually after other strategies failed such as after telling the child directly not to do something or ignoring the behaviour for a time. The move away could either be small (staying in the same location, but out of the child's immediate physical range) or a more distant move to another location.

***Cries:*** Peer cries as a consequence of child's aversive actions to her/him.

***Ignores inappropriate harmless behaviour during teacher-directed tasks:*** Children show discernment of which behaviours are more important to respond to than others. They ignore ones that are harmless, non-aversive and do not appear to communicate any critical information for the present moment. For example, during a group story, Ian puts his arm around Philip and strokes his hair. Philip continues to attend to the story. It also includes ignoring child's interactions during inappropriate contexts such as when the teacher is talking to the children on the mat and Ian calls out "Keri, Keri." Keri ignores him even though she had played enthusiastically with him at playtime. Children focus on central aspects of task and ignore the peripheral behaviours such as when Ian is silently reading on the teacher's chair instead of the expected place (the mat).

#### 4.6.4: Peers' Direct Responses (see Table 9)

***Peer reprimands (objectionable behaviour) - child complies:*** These were direct instructions to the focal child to terminate behaviour that was hurtful, damaging, aversive, interfered with the peer's tasks or damaging to materials. Examples include: Ian putting his hand on Alex' exercise book, so Alex could not do his printing, Mark kicking over a chair, Jacob taking Lisa's card, Jacob kicking Michael. Compliance involved the child terminating the behaviour almost immediately after the instruction and the peer no longer complaining about the behaviour.

***Peer reprimands (objectionable behaviour) – child ignores:*** These involved direct instructions from peers identical to those described above, but the focal child failed to comply. Consequently, the peer moved away or consulted the teacher. For example, at lunchtime, Mark hits Natasha on her back. She ignores him. He hits her on the head and laughs. She says to him, "Don't Mark." He ignores her. Mark continues to hit her while eating. Natasha talks to Mark about not hitting and how it hurts. Mark pushes her away, hits her on the head and pulls her muesli bar off her. Natasha says loudly, "No!" He hits her again, pushes her over, and then hits her on the face. Natasha says to her mates, "Move over please. I'm moving away." The group all decide to leave and Mark sits alone. (Day 1)

***Peer reprimands for harmless behaviour - compliance immaterial:*** These were instructions and comments for the child to terminate behaviour that was not in line with the institution's rules or social conventions peers, but were harmless. The instruction may also have involved information pertaining to the required behaviour. Examples of children's comments and instructions concerning harmless behaviour include: "You've done too many." (rows of printing), "You'd better put that book away." (Jonathan holds a book while attending to the teacher's instructions).

***Peer establishes compliance by use of baby/animal talk:*** Examples involved: when Jonathan took out the library card and looked at it more than the book, Simon asked Jonathan to give it to him by saying, "Ta, ta, ta?" and holding out his hand for it and when Jonathan shut the curtain between the classroom and storeroom which is normally left open, several children chased him away by saying, "Shoo, shoo, shoo."

**Peer signals:** Usually involves mention of child's first name and a non-verbal signal of where the child is to go. For example, Jonathan stands at the back of the wrong team after a team event, George calls out to him, "Jonathan, come on," pointing to the back of the right team.

**Peer describes, verbally comments on/laughs at 'incorrect' or unusual behaviour:**

This involves merely describing it or reacting to it in often a surprised tone without making any overt judgement. For example, (i) The teacher asks the children to sit up with their legs folded up. Jonathan does so, but in a more immature way. Hamish to Jonathan, "That's not how you do it." (ii) Two children leave to take the banking books away. Ian says, "Bye bye" to them. Ian's peers laugh a little amongst themselves at Ian's "Bye bye."

**Non-specific comments:** Includes brief reactions to the behaviour, which may or may not be hostile e.g. "Ow", "Hey!" "Ian!" Also includes longer comments that do not precisely convey what the peer wants from the child. For example, "You stole my baby!" (child took doll lying on table, probably unaware that it had already been claimed)

**Peer asks child (or teacher with child) why he/she engages in the behaviour:** For example, (i) Hugh to Jonathan, "Why do you just do scribble?" Also includes direct statements concerning the child's behaviour such as, "We can't understand you, Ian."

**Threatens with teacher:** Peer threatens child with reporting to the teacher or the consequences of the teacher's actions if the aversive or rule-breaking behaviour continues. For example, Jacob is not lining up. A boy in line says to him, "Here comes the teacher." Alexandra adds, "She'll be cross with you Jacob if you don't quickly line up."

#### 4.6.5: Exclusion

As indicated in Table 9, children excluded the focal child in response to unconventional behaviours in five ways.

***Authoritarian instructions:*** These were mostly instructions, which were said emphatically and were sometimes, but not always emphasised by several children in sequence albeit in a different form or by the same child repeating the same instructions. Example: James - Jonathan, "Put the block back, Jonathan." Jonathan: "No." Gerard hits Jonathan with the book he is reading. Hunter to Jonathan, "Yes, dummy!" (in response to Gerard's instruction). James to Jonathan, "Put it back!" (pointing to block corner). Jonathan: "No!"

Occasionally, authoritarian instructions consisted of brief instructions in which each word was said with much deliberation and emphatically as if chastising a younger child, e.g. "Get out now!"

***Negative evaluation:*** Peer makes direct negative comment to child involving a judgement regardless of behaviour. Examples: (i) Matthew - Jonathan, "Oh naughty Jonathan...naughty Jonathan." (reading correct book at wrong location), (ii) Alex to Jacob, "You're a naughty boy." (Jacob claims toys he did not know had already been claimed).

***Verbally/physically hostile:*** Any behaviour involving hitting, spitting, kicking or other hurtful actions such as pushing or pulling, taking things from the child against his will. For example, instead of reading a book, Jonathan is putting on a tie he finds on the floor. His teacher-aide does not reprimand him. George looks and punches/pushes Jonathan on the arm. Also includes hostile comments either on their own or in conjunction with a hurtful action. For example, the bell has gone and Jonathan is sitting on the mat holding a foam ball he played with at lunchtime. Hugh tells Jonathan to put the ball away. Jonathan does not respond. Simon takes it out of his hands and says, "No, Jonathan" angrily and boasts to Jonathan's teacher-aide, "I snatched the ball off Jonathan."

***Peers support one another against the child:*** Usually involves a sequence of interactions where peers support the protagonist. For example, Jacob uses a whiteboard duster to 'wipe' Alexandra's face saying, "I had to wipe your hair off." Alexandra replies, "Don't do that Jacob." All laugh except Alexandra. She says,

“Jacob’s a naughty boy isn’t he? (to the group of four boys)” Jacob replies to her, “Oh you are.” Samuel - Jacob, “No. You’re the naughty boy... Do you know who is the naughtiest boy? (to the group)” Michael says, “He is.” (pointing to Jacob). Alexandra concludes to Jacob, “You are a naughty boy.”

***Laughs at/ridicules child:*** Also includes teasing, put-downs and humiliation. For example, Mark falls down in a dance during music. The children watching laugh.

#### 4.6.6: Inclusion

***Interprets intent:*** Interprets child’s more limited means of communication. For example, Ian vocalises/babbles to Philip while offering him a brown crayon. Philip explains, “I don’t need it. I don’t need brown.”

***Joins child in his interpretation of the activity:*** Peer takes on same meaning as child. For example, Keri watches Ian jump instead of hop on the hopscotch. She adopts this method when playing hopscotch with Ian and says to him, “This is your way, isn’t it?”

***Provides necessary information/help to prevent harm, ridicule or disruption:*** For example, Ian heads towards the girl’s toilets. Alexander steers him in the right direction and politely says, “This way.”

***Motivates child to behave more appropriately:*** Peer provides incentive for child to engage in the task more appropriately. For example, the teacher-aide reprimands Ian for hitting his reading book on the floor. Philip asks Ian, “Do you want a stamp?” Ian to Philip, "Yeah." Philip to Ian, “Well, you read good.”

***Sticks up for child in front of him:*** For example, Ian and Alexander are blowing on one another’s necks and smiling. Philip holds Ian by the neck and says, “No.” Alexander says to Philip, “Don’t strangle Ian.”

Table 8: Range of Indirect Peer Responses to All Kinds of Rule-breaking

KEY: I=Ian; J = Jonathon; Ja = Jacob; M =Mark; N = Neil R = Richard		Pre-school	Pre-entry 1	Pre-entry 2, 3, 4	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5 or 6	Final : Day 1	Final: Day 2
<b>INDIRECT RESPONSES</b>															
<b>To adults</b>	Comments publicly to teacher		I, J	I, J	I		J	J	J	J, R			J	J	J
	Alerts teacher, aide or other adult	I, Ja	I	I	I, Ja, N	I, Ja	J	I, J, M	J, M	I, J, Ja, M, R	I, J	J	J	J	
	Asks teacher or aide about child			I, M		J	J	J							
	Informs aide about what child is/not allowed	I				J	J						J		
	Negative evaluation of child	I	I					J		J	J				
<b>To peers</b>	Describes child and behaviour (not hostile)	I		M	N	J, Ja, M, N	J					J	J	J, M	
	Describes child and behaviour -derogatory		I		I		N						J		
	Negative evaluation to peer	I	I			J	J, Ja, M, N	J	M	M, R			J		
	Tries to instigate meeting to discuss child												J		
	Instructs peer to hurt child	Ja							J						
<b>Non-verbal</b>	Protects own property	I, Ja		I		M	I			I, M					
	Stares at child		I, J	I, M		J	J		M			M			
	Ignores child – no interpretation of intent	I, J	I			J	I	I	J	J	J				
	Uncomfortable expression at child's actions	I	I, M	I	M	M	I, M	I	M	R					
	Moves away from child	I, J, Ja	M	I	I, M	M	I, M	J	J	R			J	Ja	M
	Cries	I					I		M	Ja	I	Ja, M			
	Ignores unconventional harmless behaviour during teacher-directed tasks						I	I		I	I		I	I	



**Table 9: Range of Direct Peer Responses to All Kinds of Rule-breaking**

KEY: I = Ian; J = Jonathon; Ja = Jacob; M = Mark; N = Neil; R=Richard		Pre-school	Pre-entry 1	Pre-entry 2, 3, 4	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5 or 6	Final : Day 1	Final: Day 2
<b>DIRECT RESPONSES</b>															
<b>Either inclusion or exclusion</b>	Reprimands for objectionable behaviour - child complies	J, Ja		I	I	I, Ja, M, N	I, Ja, M, N	M		I, Ja, R	I, Ja		I	J, Ja	M
	Reprimands for objectionable behaviour - child ignores	I, Ja	M		M	M	I, M	M	I	I, Ja, M	I, J	M			M
	Reprimands for harmless behaviour - compliance immaterial	J			J, Ja, N		Ja	M	J	J		M	J, JA	J, Ja, M, N	
	Establishes compliance by use of baby or animal talk			J		J									
	Signals			M	J					M, R	I				
	Describes, verbally comments on / laughs at 'incorrect' / 'unusual' behaviour (not judgmental)	Ja		I	I	Ja	J	Ja	J	R					
	Indirect comments	I, Ja				M	I, M	M		I, J, M, R	I, JA				
	Asks child why he / she engages in the behaviour	I	I	J											
	Threatens with teacher	I,Ja	I		Ja				J		I			Ja	M
<b>Exclusion</b>	Authoritarian instructions						J		J						
	Negative evaluation		I, Ja, M		M	J, Ja	Ja, M	M	J	J	Ja	J, N			
	Verbally or physically hostile	J, Ja				J	J		J, M	J		J		J	J
	Peers support one another against child	J			Ja	J, Ja	J, Ja		J, M						J
	Laughs at or ridicules child		M			M			J, M	M			J	J	
<b>Inclusion</b>	Interprets intent			I			I	I		R			I	I	I
	Joins child in his interpretation of activity	Ja, N		I		I	I	I	I	I			I	I	
	Provides information or help to prevent harm or disruption		Ja	I	I	I		I		M	I		I	I	I
	Motivates child to behave more appropriately												I	I	
	Sticks up for child in front of him									R			I		

Analysis of the data in Tables 8 and 9 reveal several noteworthy patterns. While at preschool, Ian's behaviour resulted in many instances of defensive peer reactions, such as protecting property, at school the need for this response rapidly declined as peers learnt to interpret Ian's behaviour and Ian adopted more of the behavioural norms of the classroom. Alerting adults about the child's rule-breaking, either publicly or individually during the first two weeks was a regular and frequent peer response for all the new entrants, but notably the children with DS. In all the classes, apart from Jonathan's, this behaviour ceased by the end of the children's first term as the children acquired the expected behaviours and/or the classroom norms catered for variations in individual responses. In Jonathan's class, there was no progress towards inclusion at any stage and as the term progressed, Jonathan's classmates engaged in increasingly aggressive forms of directly excluding him as evident in the final three columns of the Exclusion category. In contrast, as the children became more competent at including Ian, his peers responded directly in an inclusive way as evident by the latter three columns in the Inclusion category in Table 9. The behaviours in this category reflect that Ian's classmates increased their level of responding inclusively when he engaged in unconventional behaviour.

Mark's experience of school entry revealed some limited initial interest in the form of non-verbal reactions, but after his first week, this diminished to avoidance and a level of discomfort in interacting with him, leading to an almost total cessation of interaction.

## **Part II**

### **4.7: Case Studies**

The aim of the case studies is to highlight the interactive nature of the factors affecting inclusion for each child over time. Although incomplete, Richard's data are included in this section because they show another outcome shaped by different contextual factors from those operating in the other case studies. The case studies are presented in the following order:

(a) Mark for whom there was no major change in outcome (ongoing exclusion) at the beginning and end of his first term and whose behaviour did not markedly change during that time. Mark did not develop any personal relationships, nor did he acquire enhanced academic and social skills.

(b) Jonathan and Jacob for whom there were no changes in outcomes, but there were changes in their behaviours. Jonathan engaged in more anti-social acts and peers responded in increasingly hostile ways and Jacob engaged in less anti-social behaviour as he spent more time indoors and his anti-social behaviours outdoors were monitored by duty teachers.

(c) Neil and Ian who experienced different outcomes as a consequence of their change in settings and/or time.

(d) Richard who was excluded from more intimate levels of inclusion as he was included as an object of charity.

#### 4.7.1: No Change in Inclusion or Exclusion over Time

##### **Mark**

Mark entered school with a repertoire of anti-social behaviours, which he often used successfully to resist any forms of inclusion by peers. These behaviours included hitting, destroying other's constructions, taking items, pushing others, kicking, throwing things, breaking rules such as standing when asked to sit, non-compliance with peers' requests, disruptive inappropriate use of materials (for example, throwing crayons) and making loud noises during quiet classroom activities. Mark's resistance to benign attempts from peers willing to include him contributed to their finding the experience unrewarding. Kyle, the 7-year-old from the mainstream class next door, explained,

"He's (Mark) not good at playing with me because he says, 'No' again and again.... And he's not so good at being my partner. He just says, "No."

C.R: "So what do you do?"

Kyle: "Go and get another partner."

It was difficult for Mark and his peers to connect. Mark attended four different classes each day, which made it difficult for him and any particular group of children to get to know each other well. His anti-social behaviour exacerbated any differences created by his DS.

Mark's experience at school was that of ongoing exclusion, although the form of this exclusion changed over time. During his pre-entry visits and first week of school, peers reacted adversely to Mark directly and/or indirectly via his teachers/aides. They also tolerated many of his anti-social behaviours by looking uncomfortable and awkward, but ignoring him. After his second week, classmates avoided getting close to Mark, thus reducing their need to interact with him. By then, their interest in his unconventional behaviours had also ceased. Mark's frequency of aversive behaviours to peers and/or property (see Table 7) stayed the same, but his peers learnt that their reprimanding, negative evaluations and indirect comments had no effect on him. Classmates in both special and regular classes were thus observed leaving him to his own devices and avoiding proximity in activities such as developmental, lunchtime and walking to developmental. After his second week, apart from reprimands and the odd threat, no child responded in any other way to his rule-breaking behaviour and their comments to his teacher(s), aides and other peers also declined as they essentially avoided and ignored him.

While Mark's rate of anti-social behaviour was high (see Table 7), there were occasional times when Mark did not resist being included, suggesting that the context may have been an influential factor in sustaining his isolation. For example, when his teacher asked a typically developing girl from the classroom next door to engage Mark in a ball activity one lunchtime, he participated animatedly and when she left after several minutes, Mark waited for her return.

Peers seemed to view Mark's unconventional behaviours as defining him and they responded accordingly as if he were an outsider. Throughout the entire observation period, when he was not being ignored or avoided, he was regularly treated as an object or lower status member by children in the regular classes with whom he was 'integrated' on a daily basis. Such exclusion occurred even when he engaged in

behaviour appropriate to the setting. For instance, on his fifth day when Mark was on his own looking around at the children playing on the adventure playground, other children threw lunch paper in his face, got close to his face and mocked him for a long period of time. At the end of his first term of school, while he was treated more benignly, he was clearly still viewed as an 'oddity' or deviant outsider. During the final observation he had his cheeks patted and the toy he was using was taken from him without consultation.

Teachers also largely ignored Mark's aversive behaviour and his peers' ignoring of him. Even when a teacher-aide caught the tail end of the episode on his fifth day where a group of boys had been hostile to Mark, she merely took Mark away to find another child from his special class.

During lunch times, the children whom Mark hit were often told to reprimand him. This placed them in the role of mini-disciplinarians and positioned them as insiders/equals with their teachers rather than an equal with Mark. It made little difference to Mark's anti-social behaviour as he rarely complied. The children's response as disciplinarians may be interpreted as responsible, assertive behaviour. However, when they are presented with no other forms of interaction, they are excluded from access to more advanced forms of inclusion. During integrated times, Mark always had a teacher-aide with him who ensured his safety and helped him carry out an activity. However, she never assisted him to become a group member. Similarly, in the playground, the teacher-aide ensured Mark participated in a self-selected activity, but this was seldom anywhere near any peers from the integrated classes he attended. There were no opportunities for Mark and his typically developing peers to get to know one another. Mark's anti-social behaviour, his peers not knowing him, his absence from a regular classroom on a full-time basis and his teachers' care and facilitation of him into activities as opposed to peer groups all served to maintain Mark's exclusion.

#### 4.7.2: No Change in Outcome (Exclusion or Inclusion), but Change in Child Behaviour

##### **Jonathan**

At kindergarten, Jonathan regularly engaged in unconventional behaviours and failed to reciprocate interactions. However, he never engaged in any of the anti-social institutional rule breaking behaviours engaged in by Ian and Jacob at their preschool (see Table 7). He was compliant, non-aversive in interactions with peers, aware of rules, even enforcing them, such as not playing on the muddy grass. He never pushed, hurt or took things from children. In fact, he showed evidence of having internalised rules and applied them to prevent mishaps, such as stopping a peer from pushing her doll's pram through a big puddle by saying, "No. Wet." He was careful with equipment and he complied with peer requests to terminate interactions his peers found aversive.

At kindergarten, Jonathan was largely ignored, although he experienced both brief and longer episodes of social interaction with random peers as well as episodes of hostile exclusion where he was threatened, teased and had objects/materials taken from him. The latter occurred even when he was behaving in an identical manner to his typically developing peers (for example, dismantling and/or experimenting with an old typewriter). It seemed that peers viewed Jonathan as an unconventional or different child, regardless of whether he was actually engaging in unconventional behaviours or not. As a consequence, some children excluded him, regardless of context. A comment by one peer described her perception that Jonathan was incompetent overall.

"His brain's no good." (Alice)

The teachers left Jonathan to his own devices. While they regularly invited his participation into activities, they never facilitated his inclusion with a peer or group. Furthermore, if he offered no response to their invitations to engage in activities, he was left alone even if this resulted in his remaining unoccupied or engaged in low-level activity (for example, walking around the path outdoors). The staff believed that Jonathan was well accepted by his peers and they had not witnessed any exclusion or hostility from peers during his time at kindergarten (nearly two years). While they

commented that he did not have specific friends, this was not considered an issue, as they believed that the majority of children would play with him, should he choose to become involved with them. The data however, suggested that many children did not include Jonathan and that both Jonathan and his peers had difficulty connecting with each other. The teachers' beliefs that Jonathan was well-accepted meant that they did not think that they needed to do anything to facilitate his inclusion. This limited the kinds of inclusion experienced by Jonathan and his peers.

On school entry, Jonathan continued to engage in unconventional behaviours (such as scribbling in his printing book and playing with the library card instead of reading his book). Also, as at kindergarten, he frequently failed to respond to peer and teacher interactions. On his first visit, when he did respond to a peer, his response consisted of unintelligible babbling. Jonathan did attempt to interact with the group of boys he sat with during seat-work, but his strategies were unsuccessful. Even when he used conventional, non-aversive strategies such as standing by watching with interest or joining the group in a parallel way (running with them), it always resulted in their moving away from him.

By the end of Jonathan's first week, he started to engage in aversive anti-social behaviours and breaking institutional rules and he continued to engage in all forms of rule-breaking behaviours until observations ceased. His behaviour looked remarkably similar to Ian's institutional rule-breaking behaviour in kindergarten (see Table 7). Since Jonathan could not connect with the content of the explicit academic curriculum (see Chapters 7, 8 and 9) or gain entry as a valued participant of a peer group, his anti-social behaviour seemed to be his effective way of gaining some attention. Every time Jonathan engaged in something unconventional regardless of whether it was actually harmful or not, children excluded him or alerted the teacher. Often the teacher would interrupt what she was doing to deal with him. Jonathan was, however, keen to experience inclusion as a valued member of the class. One wet lunchtime in his third week, he was the only one seated at his set of desks. All the other desks were occupied. This meant that the last three children to walk back from the cloakroom had to sit around Jonathan if they wanted to sit down. Despite the girls' lack of enthusiasm, they did sit at these remaining seats around Jonathan. Jonathan did not

read their disgruntled looks, but interpreted their sitting around him as their choice. He exclaimed excitedly, "All by me!" (as if he finally felt part of a group). However, his conventional efforts to be included were ignored. For example, he showed Margaret his sandwich, "Look. I got Marmite" (a sandwich spread). She looked but did not respond. When he tried more unconventional means after the failure of his conventional approach, he found that these too failed (for example, by showing Margaret, then others his mouth full of sandwich).

Jonathan experienced ongoing exclusion from individuals or groups from school entry until observations ceased a term later. Apart from the odd greeting (pleasantry), such as "Hello" and "Good-bye" Jonathan was totally ignored on his first two pre-entry visits. Throughout the term, Jonathan did experience some lengthy episodes of reciprocal play with different classmates during lunch or playtime but they did not lead to friendship. He was never sought out by a classmate as someone to sit beside during lunch or as a friend to play with after eating had ceased. His peers never participated with him in any of his self-initiated activities. The extent of his exclusion was summed up by his classmates towards the end of the term when I asked them about Jonathan's friends.

C.R: "Who do you think are Jonathan's friends?"

Simon: His Mum."

C.R: "Mmm. Anyone else?"

Simon: "No."

C.R: "What about any other children in the class?"

Simon, "No."

Henry: "His brother." (In reply to the question about Jonathan's friends)

C.R: "O.k. Anyone else?"

Henry: "No."

As the term proceeded, Jonathan experienced regular episodes of active hostile exclusion, which increased in frequency and length throughout the term. They occurred both inside and outside of the classroom, and always when there was no teacher in close proximity. These episodes consisted of being laughed at, ridiculed, spat at, chased and hit. Peers made no distinction between Jonathan's behaviours that were unconventional, but harmless and others that were potentially harmful to



individuals or materials.

Unlike Ian's peers who encouraged Ian out of situations that were potentially harmful or problematic for him, Jonathan's peers teased him in such situations (for example when he attempted to fill a water bottle with no base and the water went right through). They also included him into demeaning roles such as dare-devil and subordinate, thus exacerbating his exclusion and highlighting his isolation when none of his peers advocated for him. During one playtime, Simon and Lucy enticed Jonathan to open the classroom door and enter Room 9, something they knew was not permitted and punishable.

Simon says to Jonathan, "Open it, Jonathan." Lucy repeats, "Open it, Jonathan." Jonathan tries to, but the children in Room 9 are holding it shut on the inside so that the door will not open.

From Jonathan's first pre-entry visit through to the last observation, his peers regularly talked about him as a deviant child, both in front of him as if he did not exist, and amongst each other when he was not present. Peers also directed requests/comments for him to his teacher-aide instead of to him directly.

While his classmates did socialise Jonathan into their classroom rules and norms in the way they did with each other, they went beyond this, and aligned themselves with the teacher, taking on the role of mini-teachers. As an example, when the children were required to engage in silent reading after an activity, Jonathan started reading the pile of children's name cards instead of reading a book. Rebecca took on the role of 'disciplining' Jonathan as if she were the teacher.

One of the most striking features of Table 9 is that when Jonathan engaged in any unconventional behaviour at kindergarten or school, hardly any of his peers in either context made any attempts at interpreting it or connecting with Jonathan in a positive way about it. As the term proceeded, peers became more and more hostile towards Jonathan who in turn complied with requests and instructions and conformed less and less frequently (possibly in an effort to get some recognition).

## **Jacob**

Jacob's behaviour at kindergarten and in the school playground was often characterised by breaking the institutional rules, mainly by engaging in antisocial behaviours (see Table 7). He was also capable of engaging in more socially appropriate ways with his peer group, his classmates in general and with adults. In all contexts, Jacob used skills of negotiation, agreeing with others, making suggestions, complying with others' requests, making pleasantries, talking about things in common, turn taking, repairing interactions and staying in close proximity whether it be for wandering around together, doing the assigned task or playing a particular game.

In comparison to his behaviour at kindergarten, Jacob rarely engaged in anti-social behaviours in the classroom on school entry and throughout his first term (see Table 7), but he continued to do so in the playground, although with less frequency than at kindergarten. Even though Jacob's peer group at school was not the same as that at kindergarten, his new friends shared the same kinds of anti-social values. During unstructured times, these behaviours consisted of intimidating and teasing girls, taking things others were using (not personal property) and physical and verbal aggression amongst one another in the group, but also as a group towards others. His particular group of friends supported Jacob's actions such as on the following occasion when he was taking hula hoops from other children.

As Jacob attempted to pull a hoop, his friend Kyle arrived and said, "I'll help you, Jacob. Come on Peter Pan (Jacob)." They manage to pull it from the other boy.

His peer group encouraged and rewarded Jacob for increasing his level of anti-social acts. For example, not only was he encouraged to take someone's doll at kindergarten, but also when he had it, one of the group encouraged him to drop it down a dirty hole. Each time classmates reported Jacob's anti-social behaviour to a teacher she listened to the complaint, but did not take any disciplinary action. As an example, Jacob and his friend (James) marked another child's drawing with their felt pens. The child showed the teacher and reported, "Look, they done that. They done that." (pointing to Jacob and James). The teacher attended to the complaint, but carried on with what

she was doing. Jacob and James smiled at one another, then left the drawing table. His head teacher also reported that she was unaware of Jacob's anti-social behaviour.

"Some staff have found in the playground...he uses his fists a bit, but I haven't found that myself."

With no staff involvement, Jacob and his peer group were free to engage in unlimited amounts of anti-social behaviours with only their peers to challenge them. Peers who did not belong to Jacob's particular group had little success in counteracting Jonathan's aversive behaviours and frequently acquiesced.

At the same time, many of Jacob's classmates both at kindergarten and school generally avoided him or were wary of him. School classmate (Samuel) summed up what was an issue for many children who were not in Jacob's peer group,

"I have to keep an eye on him (Jacob) in case he might do something naughty to me."

Although the nature of the peer group differed from kindergarten to school and changed a little throughout the term as new children arrived, the way Jacob was included remained the same at the end of his first term at school as it did on his entry. There was never a time when Jacob was without a particular individual or group.

At school, teachers responded quite differently to his anti-social behaviours. Children's complaints about his behaviour in the playground were taken seriously and followed-up with Jacob being verbally reprimanded for offensive behaviours. He was also interrupted in the act on several occasions by the duty teacher and reminded of the rules about the use of sticks, throwing, hitting and similar anti-social behaviours. In class, during his first week, he was publicly reprimanded for rejecting an assigned girl as partner for folk dancing and rules for including one another were regularly specified by his teachers. It seems likely that the school setting, which involved more time under teacher surveillance in a smaller space, an inclusive context which involved norms for including one another and the teacher's awareness of and consistency in reprimanding Jacob's anti-social activities, resulted in the decline in rate of his anti-social acts. However, such steps were clearly insufficient to change his values and

choice of friends when both external structural and/or social constraints were not evident.

#### 4.7.3: Changes in Exclusion/Inclusion

##### **Ian**

Ian's behaviour at kindergarten was characterised by high levels of anti-social behaviours, regardless of teacher presence (Table 7). Unlike Jacob who discerned when and when not to engage in such behaviours (when adults were not looking), Ian did not discriminate amongst whom he aggravated and he did so irrespective of adult presence. He was non-compliant with peers and adults. His behaviour was clearly a factor in alienating him from his peers. There were instances when he was invited to play, but his offensive behaviours and failure to comply with requests resulted in peers moving away from him. Kindergarten peers frequently commented on his aversive behaviours and all the children interviewed used his anti-social behaviours as the reason for their reluctance to play with him. While Ian was capable of interacting appropriately with peers (he interacted with two girls at the collage table for approximately 10 minutes), he did not often do so. He interacted with adults three times as often as he did with his peers (excluding aversive interactions).

At kindergarten, peers treated Ian like a much younger child and outsider. They explained Ian's aversive behaviours on the basis of, "He's only three." or "He doesn't know how to dig." Encouraged by the teacher, they also acted as mini-disciplinarians, reprimanding him for engaging in anti-social behaviour. However, Ian never complied with their instructions, which placed them in a no-win situation as in the following example.

A group of children used the strategy (reprimanding Ian) repeatedly to stop Ian from throwing stones (gravel) at them. Finally, they resorted to throwing the stones back at Ian, which was the only aspect of this interaction that the teacher noticed. These girls received an extensive reprimand for not having used the verbal strategy. The teacher was clearly unaware that these children had made extensive attempts at using her strategy, but no matter how they implemented it, it had no effect on Ian's behaviour.

Peers positioned themselves with the teacher more than they did with Ian, casting Ian into the role of outsider. It was not uncommon for peers to make comments to the

teacher like, “Ian can’t paint on the wall, can he?” and “Isn’t he being a bit naughty?”

Similarly, teachers used other children as consultants about whether or not Ian had behaved adversely. For example, when Ian and several others were sitting in the book corner waiting for their parents to collect them, the teacher noticed a book on the floor and Ian not reading. She asked the group,

“Did he (referring to Ian) take a book and throw it?”

In the preschool setting, children learnt this role as teachers focussed specifically on Ian’s deficits and inappropriate behaviour instead of focusing on all the children engaging in appropriate behaviour. For instance,

When a child was throwing water around the sandpit and some of it touched Ian (as well as others), the teacher stated to the child, “if you do that to Ian, he’ll think that it’s o.k.”

Ian’s peers were thus positioned in roles of extra good role models, care-takers, mini-helpers, teachers, disciplinarians and sources of information for and about Ian as opposed to Ian’s equals and/or friends. Instead of stressing the need for children to behave appropriately because it might impact negatively on others generally, these children were taught only about the impact of their behaviour on Ian, thus constructing him as an outsider.

Ian’s aversive behaviours received considerable teacher attention, but the teachers seldom enforced the rules. They provided him with a multitude of reasons why he should not engage in the behaviour, while he continued engaging in the behaviour.

Children received reinforcement for interacting with Ian, but it focused on their charity or kindness. For example,

Just before Jessica and Ian’s caregivers came to collect them, Jessica and Ian were reading a book together. When Jessica’s father arrived, Jessica said to him, “I’m reading this (book) to Ian.”

The teacher's response to Jessica's comment was, "That was really kind," implying that interacting with Ian was an act of kindness rather than a mutually shared activity.

Overall, the context created by the teaching staff constrained opportunities for Ian and his peers to develop mutually satisfying relationships and it also prevented Ian from learning the institutional rules concerning appropriate social behaviour.

Ian arrived at school displaying the same repertoire of anti-social behaviours he had exhibited at kindergarten. He also engaged in much unconventional behaviour. During four pre-entry visits, he was observed kicking, pushing, hitting children, defacing others' work, throwing crayons at children, taking items from others, and refusing to comply with peer and adult instructions. However, by the end his first term, Ian engaged in few of these anti-social behaviours. Some of the major differences in Ian's behaviour after a term of school attendance included the following three developments:

(i) Engagement in more Socially Appropriate Behaviour: Ian engaged in more appropriate social behaviours. Thus, instead of taking items, he would ask for items and wait. Activities involving close proximity (such as sitting on the mat, standing in line, small maths groups working together), in which Ian used to hit, kick push and take things from others, no longer elicited these kinds of behaviours. Instead, Ian generally engaged in the required activity appropriately or waited until instructions were given. He also complied with adult and peer instructions consistently. From Ian's third week of school, he started verbally telling others the classroom rules when they did not comply. This suggests Ian had internalised the rules, something not evident at kindergarten or during the first weeks of school.

(ii) Engagement in Co-operative Play: In contexts where Ian sabotaged others' activities (for example, breaking block constructions or drawing on others' printing books), Ian not only refrained from such activity, but engaged in and contributed to more advanced forms of play with friends.

(iii) Being Reciprocal/Contributing: At kindergarten and on school entry, Ian was seldom observed making a positive contribution to the play of others or their welfare. After a term's attendance, there were numerous instances. For example,

Brendon asks generally, "Where's my little car?" Ian points to it and says, "There." Brendon then says, "Oh thanks." to Ian.

Other examples of Ian's contributions involved his: a) sharing of valued items such as potato chips, b) initiating an activity and inviting others to join in such as, "Do you want to kick the ball with me?" c) showing an interest in others' activities and encouraging them, such as enticing Elliot to jump down from a ledge, "Jump...jump!", d) offering appropriate materials and/or ideas for an activity, e) providing socio-emotional support such as patting a classmate's back whilst coughing, f) thanking peers for favours/requests, g) displaying passion for particular activities, such as singing, folk dancing, reading and soccer, and h) providing appropriate instructions for joint success at an activity." Ian also started reinforcing his friends for their performance in games and school activities. For example, in a game of ball, when he saw a group scrambling to get the ball, Ian called out, "Get it Alex!" (to his friend). Similarly, when undertaking a colouring-in activity, Ian says to Alex, "Nice."

### Peer Responses to Ian

The responses of Ian's peers to his behaviour shifted within the first fortnight of his school attendance. When Ian arrived at school, his peers excluded him and positioned him as an outsider. There were incidents such as the following where classmates directly asked Ian's itinerant early intervention teacher to remove him from specific activities as if he were an object or toddler. For example,

Kelly comments when Ian arrives in the family corner by saying out loud, "Oh no. Ian wants to play." followed by a request to the itinerant teacher, "Can you take Ian away?" (Pre-entry 2).

During his initial visits to school, Ian was regularly talked about in negative terms or indirectly in a perplexed manner, thus casting him into the role of an outsider, For instance,

Girl 1 to Girl 2, "He (referring to Ian) stole my baby (doll)!" (pre-entry 2)

He was also excluded by using language typically used for animals. On an attempt to get in the family corner, a peer puts her arms out to prevent him entering and says, “Shoo shoo” to him as if she were banning a dog from the kitchen.

By the end of his first term, peers were hardly ever observed interacting with Ian in these ways. From approximately his second week onwards Ian became included as an age-mate in a wide variety of social relationships from pleasantries to being an integral valued member of the class and a specific peer group. By the end of term, there were no episodes of peers treating Ian as an object, speaking about him as if he were not fully human or doing things to him without his permission. While Ian’s unconventional behaviours had been a topic of conversation on his immediate school entry, peers no longer discussed such behaviour amongst themselves. Either they: a) ignored such behaviour (tolerance) if it was inconsequential (for instance, sitting on the teacher’s chair), b) adopted it as a new norm for doing things (for example, Ian’s jumping on the hopscotch instead of hopping became another way of playing hopscotch), c) interpreted its intent or d) responded to it respectfully in situations where Ian could come to harm (such as going outdoors on a wet day). At the same time as Ian became more fully included and learnt what was expected of him as a school pupil, his level of engagement in unconventional behaviours decreased.

Whereas at kindergarten and at the beginning of Ian’s entry to school, peers ignored, tolerated or overtly excluded Ian, within weeks of school attendance, many classmates and not only those in his peer group, engaged in a wide range of interactions with him. These included: a) pleasantries concerning the weather, lunch or activities, b) positive feedback on tasks (Alex – Ian, “Yours is going to look good.”), c) comfort after a fall, d) being chosen as a partner and e) engaging in brief ‘disallowed’ behaviour part of the peer culture (for example, blowing on one another’s necks and laughing quietly at the back of the mat). His classmates also learnt to emphasise the critical aspects of interactions. For example, Ian shows Alex his name written on the end of his pencil, saying, “Look, name.” Alex looks and responds, “Yes, that’s yours.” (with an emphasis on the latter word).



Observations with Ian's closest friends showed a marked shift in their positioning of Ian. Instead of their earlier references to Ian as an outsider (for example, "He's not allowed on our road"), his peer group now referred to him as an integral member as evidenced by their use of the pronoun 'we.' During a final observation when Ian and several of his peer group were playing in the block corner, Alex said to Ian,

"We need to make a new road" to which Ian responded, "Yeah, road."

By the end of his first week of school, Ian was observed with a loosely structured group of specific classmates (mostly boys, but also some girls) during unstructured times. These children sought him out and vice versa and they engaged in mutually reciprocal activities. Ian's behaviour changed rapidly from the aversive behaviours observed at kindergarten, during his school pre-entry visits and the first few days of school to the more socially mature behaviours described above.

Ian's peer group or closest friends often waited for him to finish lunch, they consistently sat with him at lunchtime and they engaged in mutually reciprocal activities during unstructured times. At the same time, all members, including Ian often went off to engage in separate activities, but they regularly teamed up together again. Members of this group also advocated for Ian when he was in strife or difficulty.

Peers also included Ian in the same sorts of instructions they gave one another when they were annoyed by his behaviour or he did not comply with the rules of the activity. They also learnt when not to involve themselves, such as when he initiated inappropriate activities during specific teacher-directed classroom tasks. Instead, they ignored him or motivated him to succeed in the task. For instance,

When Ian is looking away from his reading book, Philip says to him, "Do you want a stamp?" Ian replies, "Yeah." Philip replies, "Well, you read good." Ian responds by attending to the text again.

Overall, peers helped socialise Ian into the general norms of school behaviour, which they had adopted, in the way they did with other new entrants.

During their activities, some of those in Ian's peer group referred to each other by nicknames. This also occurred for Ian, particularly in the context of playing soccer. Using a nickname suggests familiarity and is often a sign of inclusion within the group. Unlike the other two boys with DS (Mark and Jonathan), whose classmates were either unable to name their school friends or indicated that they did not have any, Ian's classmates were easily able to list his friends or confirm that he was part of a group. This was true even if they could not name the particular children concerned, as Erin's comment suggests,

“...um his (Ian's) friends....well there's some of the kids in my class and I don't know their names because I'm not playing with them usually.”

The data indicate that, as the novelty of Ian's presence diminished and the children were facilitated and supported in their interactions (see following chapter) with Ian, he became an integral member of the class and its variety of teacher-specified and child-initiated subgroups. As he became an active participant of the group, his classmates' indirect interactions about him as an outsider ceased. Ian was the only child with DS for whom this process occurred.

### **Neil**

Neil showed evidence of considerable social competence at preschool and school. At playcentre he was socially compliant with his peers, had friends who shared similar interests (transformers, dinosaurs, creative pursuits) and he spent much of his time engaged with them. Peers frequently sought him out, inviting him to play. At playcentre and school, he was observed: resolving conflict, negotiating, reinforcing others' ideas and efforts, using adults to help him achieve his goals, offering potentially useful materials to peers, initiating tasks and extending them both with and without peers.

On school entry, Neil used his range of mature social skills to facilitate his entry into the peer group of boys. However, they were insufficient to allow him access due to the dynamics of the group. One dominant member (George) consistently refused Neil access from his second day onwards. Individual members and one member in particular (Hugh) did include Neil on his first day and erratically throughout his first

month of schooling. However, George seemed to perceive Neil's presence as a threat to his close relationship with Hugh as Neil and Hugh had played together animatedly on Neil's first day, leaving George on the periphery. From Neil's second day onwards, George made consistent attempts at excluding Neil from the group and he encouraged Hugh to do likewise. From then on until the end of the year (approximately 6 weeks), Neil experienced erratic episodes of inclusion as a playmate, but they were constantly interrupted by hostile episodes of exclusion which interfered with Neil's inclusion as a friend or valued member of the group. For instance,

Neil, George and Hugh are playing 'Baby dinosaurs' (crawling around the grass, laughing and chasing one another) interspersed with running chasing one another. George runs to the drinking taps and Neil follows. George drinks water and squirts/spits it out at Neil. Neil runs away under the fort. He lies down in the gravel. George comes over to him with his mouth full of water and squirts/spits it out at Neil. George laughs. Neil looks frightened. As George walks back to the water fountain, Neil (apparently ignoring the whole incident) attempts to resurrect the game by walking towards George and Hugh, calling out 'baby dinosaurs.' George pushes Neil back and squirts/spits water at him again. Hugh and George play on the fort. Neil attempts to join them, but George calls out to Neil, "You're not playing!" (Day 2)

Such exclusion (albeit briefer and of a less physical nature) also occurred in the classroom. For example, on day three during silent reading, Neil glanced at the book Hugh and George were reading together. George immediately said to Neil, "You can't look at this."

After Neil's first experience of exclusion on his second day (see above episode), he tried a number of strategies to facilitate his inclusion. For instance, after several incidents of being excluded on day four by both Hugh and George, Neil ignored his previous treatment and smiled at George saying, "Baby dinosaurs." (the game they were all involved with animatedly on Day 1). At other times, Neil watched their activity with interest and offered a suggestion. During his third week, Neil tried catching up with Hugh and George who kept running away from him. He pleaded with them to listen,

"Stop, Stop, Stop! Listen to me please!" "I aren't a monster at all (2X). You can see. I aren't."

The boys continued to ignore him and ran off. On another occasion, Neil watched and asked, “Can I be the dinobat?” While Hugh agreed to Neil’s request, they both ignored him in the actual game. All Neil’s attempts resulted in ongoing exclusion either by their ignoring him, hiding from him or by clear, verbal responses such as, “You’re not playing!”

Neil was excluded during his first six weeks of school, which his mother summed up as,

“He still doesn’t have a niche there.”

However, in the new year after the long summer holidays, these boys were no longer present and new children arrived including a boy Neil knew from his neighbourhood (Scott). In this new context, Neil was able to utilise and develop his repertoire of social skills to develop a special friendship. Throughout his time at school, he was well-accepted in the role of valued classmate. Children readily included him as a partner for activities, those at his table included him in animated conversations during writing and drawing times and generally children readily engaged with Neil during class activities. However, despite Neil engaging in very little rule-breaking behaviour (see Table 8) and being generally well-liked, none of these children sought him out as a friend during unstructured times. Neil’s desk was among girls and unlike Ian’s class, there were strong gender-based friendships in this classroom. This may have hindered the development of same-sex friendships and increased his desire to join the one and only boys’ group.

### **Richard**

Richard who was observed for two days during his second week of school experienced considerable peer interaction amongst his classmates, but the processes necessary for long-term inclusion (same-status relationships, peers connecting with Richard’s actual as opposed to stereotypical characteristics, availability to his classmates) were lacking. Richard was included in a variety of lower status roles, including being an object of charity, a pet and a younger child. Classmates and older children frequently responded to Richard in a stereotypical way, ignoring his actual responses. For example, they did things for Richard that he could do for himself and did not want

help with, or they ignored his choices in favour of their own choices. Consequently, Richard was not observed engaging in even the highest category of level 1 inclusion (see Table 6). Apart from fleeting incidents and pleasantries, in which it was impossible to ascertain which status peers assigned him, all other interactions involved unequal relationships.

What distinguished Richard's exclusion from, that experienced by Mark, Jonathan and Neil was that Richard was never interacted with adversely or in a hostile manner, but always treated kindly. For instance, a group of girls surrounded Richard whenever they were able and during play and lunchtime an older child in the school was rostered to 'mind' Richard. This had the effect of making Richard unavailable as a potential friend to the majority of classmates and limited his and his peers' opportunities for equal status relationships.

A closer analysis of the interactions suggests that while Richard's classmates' intentions seemed benign, many of the interactions were actually disrespectful, oppressive and a barrier to his and his classmates' development and inclusion. Richard was often treated as an object that could be included or handed over to someone else depending on peers' wishes. For example, after some arguing about who could 'look after' Richard, the girl who won the argument decided not long after that she had had enough and offered him to one of the girls who had previously missed out. These girls would even find another female classmate for Richard if the current 'caretaker' wanted to or was required to do something else. Help was given, even if it was resisted, not required or desirable. The kinds of interactions occurring in this classroom were preventing Richard and his peers from experiencing more advanced forms of inclusion and the kinds of skills and attitudes facilitative of living in an authentically inclusive society.

#### **4.8: Summary of Chapter Four**

In this chapter, it has been shown that none of the children with DS experienced authentic inclusion (interactions comprising both levels 1 and 2 forms of inclusion as identified in the previous chapter) at preschool while both typically developing boys

did. However, irrespective of impairment, these outcomes and underlying processes changed at primary school for two of the children (Ian and Neil). These changes occurred in different directions. While Ian became an included member at school towards the end of his first week, Neil was excluded for his first six weeks prior to the summer holidays. Facilitative inclusion only occurred after changes in class composition. While Jonathan remained excluded in both settings, he behaved increasingly anti-socially at school which he never did at preschool and his school peers responded in increasingly hostile ways towards him. Mark remained excluded at the beginning and end of his first school term with his peers largely ignoring him and Jacob was the only one who remained an included member both at preschool and throughout his entire first term at school. Richard was excluded as an equal participant, but included as a lower status member.

A key factor hindering peer inclusion seemed to be the presence of unconventional behaviours. These included breaking overt institutional rules (Table 7) and failing to engage in expected or familiar behaviours. Table 7 outlines the kinds of overt rule-breaking behaviours each of the children engaged in at preschool and school, while Tables 8 and 9 outline how their peers responded to these behaviours. Apart from Jacob and Mark who were either included or excluded, different patterns of interactions emerged for each of the other children in their preschool and school settings.

For Ian, the way his school peers responded to him not long after his first school pre-entry visit resulted in his experiencing inclusion whereas at preschool, his peers had mostly treated him kindly, but as a deviant and/or much younger member. Mark's peers generally responded negatively to his unconventional behaviours either directly or indirectly by alerting the teachers or ignoring him. His anti-social responses to children continued. Despite Jonathan's lack of institutional rule-breaking behaviour, Jonathan was not included at preschool. Peers seemed to have difficulty relating to his failure to adhere to more implicit rules they were familiar with such as expecting an intelligible response when spoken to. At school, after being ignored for the first few days including his pre-entry visits, Jonathan started experiencing exclusion in an increasingly hostile manner. At the same time, his rate of anti-social and institutional

rule-breaking behaviours increased markedly. Peers responded to the latter as well as the former in the same negative way, often drawing the teacher's attention to them. In the same environment, Neil who engaged in few unconventional or rule-breaking behaviours at preschool or school (see Table 7) also experienced exclusion in the same hostile manner as Jonathan for the most part of his first term of school. However, Neil who possessed more advanced skills coped with it in a more mature manner. He told the boys off directly for offending him (for example, "Stop that. It annoys me so much!"), he engaged in imaginative games on his own at lunchtime and in class, he got on with his school work regardless of what was going on around him. These were not options readily available to Jonathan, given his less well-developed, school-related abilities.

The data indicate that one educational context is not superior to the other for inclusion as patterns of peer interaction are not unique to a particular setting or necessarily static over time. This was most evident in Ian's two settings, where peers at preschool treated both Ian's aversive rule-breaking and unconventional behaviours with kindness and tolerance, but never facilitated any shared meanings with him in the way the children learnt to do very quickly at school. In part this was due to Ian's consistent non-compliance with requests to terminate offensive behaviours, which resulted in children not being able to get to know him and so develop any shared meanings. When Ian started his pre-entry visits to school, some peers treated Ian's aversive behaviours less benignly, while others were puzzled by them and responded by ignoring him. However, by the end of his first week, peers were including Ian as a valued same-status member of the class and simultaneously his rate of engagement in aversive behaviours dropped markedly. While, throughout his time at school, he engaged in less aversive rule-breaking behaviour, he still engaged in unconventional behaviours related to his DS. However, his classmates responded to these behaviours in a different way from his peers at kindergarten or the classmates in Mark, Jonathan or Richard's classrooms. Ian's classmates made attempts at interpreting the intent of Ian's behaviour, by providing respectful support, help or information, whereas responses in the other classrooms consisted primarily of ignoring, overtly and indirectly excluding and responding to stereotypical characteristics of DS instead of the child's actual behaviour. This finding suggested that there were factors evident in

this context which did not occur in any of the other contexts. Furthermore, since Jonathan and Neil both experienced exclusion on their entry to school when only Jonathan had DS suggests that there were classroom factors operating in this setting, which prevented new children from entering already-existing groups. Classroom factors contributing to the children's experiences and the and the dynamics between the focal child and peer group will be explored in the next chapter to illuminate what accounts for the particular patterns of peer interaction in each institution.



## CHAPTER 5: THE CONTEXT

### 5.1: Introduction

The evidence in the previous two chapters has shown that the behaviour of individual children and their experiences of inclusion or exclusion at school can not be predicted from their inclusion or exclusion at preschool. This makes it important to identify and analyse the contextual factors that might explain these individual differences in outcomes. This chapter addresses the role of contexts in the children's experiences of inclusion and exclusion.

There are four inter-related aspects of the wider cultural context for each child. These are:

- 1) The teachers' practices in the classroom and playground and their disability-related beliefs that shape those practices. This involves the child's microsystem, which Bronfenbrenner describes as "a pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics" (1979, p. 11). This is discussed in Section 1 of this chapter.
- 2) The way classroom and playground practices were adopted or modified to accommodate the focal child. This also involves the way the microsystem adapts or fails to adapt to the inclusion of the focal child. This is discussed in Section 2 of this chapter.
- 3) Links between the teachers and the family and other organisations concerning the child that affected the focal child's school experiences.
- 4) Changes in the context, unrelated to teacher's classroom practice, for example, re-organisation of classes. This involves the child's mesosystem, which Bronfenbrenner describes as "the inter-relations among two or more settings in which the developing person participates" (1979, p. 2), such as the home and school. This section also concerns the exosystem, which comprises settings the child does not actively participate in, but influences what happens in the child's microsystem(s), for

example, professional support to teachers and parents. This is discussed in Section 3 of this chapter.

In order for children to experience a successful transition to school by becoming valued classroom members, participating in the full range of roles evident in Levels 1 and 2 inclusion as well as acquiring culturally-valued skills, certain contextual conditions need to be present.

The first section deals with existing school practices. These are included because the enrolment of children with identifiable impairments requires that schools attend to issues concerning diversity. If schools already have practices in place which cater for the diversity in their student population (in an inclusive way), then successful outcomes for any new entrant child (DS or not) are more likely. Existing inclusive practices are therefore more likely to provide a framework for incorporating additional practices specific to the focal children.

A number of existing practices and their surrounding processes were identified. Those included in this chapter encompassed the consistent patterns of responses within individual schools, as well as responses among the different schools to the issues identified in Chapters 3 and 4. These differences were associated with individual children's outcomes whether of inclusion or exclusion, regardless of DS. The discussion of these practices which follow deals with them one at a time. Focussing successively on these practices does not mean that they are presented as a set of mutually exclusive categories.

Section 1 involves a description of existing school practices. It outlines how teachers specified social norms and attended to peer relationships in the classroom and playground and considers how the teachers' philosophy of child development and learning impacted on practices. The section concludes with a review of whether school practices promoted continuity or discontinuity in the children's experiences of inclusion or exclusion during their transitions to school.

Section 2 involves a description of the classroom and school practices that were instigated or adapted on behalf of the child with DS. The 10 practices described were

ones which impacted on the kinds of social relationships taking place in a major way and were undertaken quite differently in the school where inclusion occurred from those where exclusion was the outcome.

Section 3 is an examination of the practices and issues that indirectly impinge on the inclusion of the focal children (irrespective of DS). These include the parent-school relationship, the monitoring of inclusive practices, teacher support and changes in the context beyond the teacher's practices.

Not all the children's experiences are described in every section or category. This is because sometimes there were insufficient data to draw any valid conclusion or because the data on some children did not add anything to that section or category.

## **SECTION 1**

### **Part A**

#### **5.2: Existing School Practices (Classroom and Playground)**

Each of the schools had existing practices that either facilitated or hindered the arrival of a new entrant, regardless of disability.

Apart from Ian's school where I spent three days prior to his arrival in his classroom and four weeks in Neil's classroom (observing Jonathan), I was unable to gather observational data on existing classroom and school procedures before the other children entered school. Despite this limitation, some data concerning existing practices were gathered through i) observing repeated procedures that were in existence when the focal child arrived at school, ii) observing what the teacher did in similar circumstances with other children, iii) recording what teachers reported about their practices during transition meetings, and iv) the teachers' description of their classroom practices.

##### 5.2.1: Classroom/School Issues

###### ***(i) Similarities in teacher practices***

All teachers warmly welcomed the new entrant on his first day, regardless of disability and continued to do so throughout the data collection period. For all

children, the teacher did something special to mark the child's first day, such as inviting the child to talk about his birthday, letting the child take the class news sheet home or mentioning the child's first day on the news sheet. There was no evidence that any of the teachers were reluctant to have the child with DS in their classrooms. He was as warmly received as the typically developing children.

All teachers regularly reinforced the child's individual efforts at achievement whether it was academic performance, persevering at tasks or compliance with routines. Also, but less frequently, they reprimanded the child for unacceptable behaviour in a way similar to that of other classmates. All used peer modelling as a way of encouraging children to engage in appropriate behaviours and the child with DS was sometimes used as the model for other children to imitate, for instance, "Look at Jonathan Smith sitting up beautifully with his arms folded!" At other times, the teacher used other children as models for the child with DS, such as, "Look at Alex, Ian. He has his hands under him."

Teachers of all the children who were enrolled full-time in regular classrooms physically included the children with DS in the same wide variety of daily tasks, activities and procedures as their classmates. These included being given the same stationery, taking messages to the office with a partner, being the leader of a line or group, going on excursions, assembly, library visits, placement in regular maths, reading and news groups, and having their work displayed. However, in the more fundamental aspects of teaching practice, there was large variation in how inclusion was interpreted and implemented. For example, how teachers facilitated the child's learning of content, how they facilitated the child's inclusion into the class and smaller groups and how they responded to issues prompted by the child's DS. The following section describes how the contexts created by the teachers are linked to the various outcomes for each child with DS.

#### ***(ii) Specification of social norms and attention to peer relationships***

Transition to school for each focal child required the learning of new rules and behaviours, which involved new social roles and as well as those pertaining to the specified classroom tasks. Because young children are likely to have difficulty ascertaining procedural from social norms (Nucci, 1987) and may not understand

their relative importance (abilities necessary for facilitative inclusion), it seemed important to identify if and how teachers helped children distinguish between these two kinds of norms. For example, new entrants do not necessarily know that ensuring that classmates are not excluded from an activity is probably a more important consideration than doing the activity in the wrong place. Teacher norms can therefore be sub-divided into two categories: those involving i) task procedures and maintaining social order and ii) appropriate' social/moral behaviour during the task, such as sharing the materials, and ensuring that all are included.

Ian's teacher and teacher-aide were the only ones who consistently specified social norms throughout the day, reminded children of the norms, reinforced participation in social behaviour commensurate with those norms and interrupted responses which transgressed these norms. These norms, which were evident prior to, during and after Ian's entry included, looking out for and including one another (especially during child-initiated activities such as play and lunchtimes), sharing the materials, allowing boys and girls access to areas such as the family corner and block corner, helping one another, ensuring that no-one was left out and waiting for one another. Both the teacher and teacher-aide facilitated regular discussions about social relationships in a way that facilitated interaction between the child and her/his peers. For instance, when a child complained that lunchtime was too long, the teacher asked the child what she liked doing and then asked for volunteers who enjoyed the same activity to include the child next time. In this way, the responsibility for becoming included was not left up to the child with the concern. Ian's teacher and teacher-aide believed that attention to social relationships, which included the specification of moral norms, was required for all the children. The teacher stated:

I like to try and make the classroom the sort of place where the children are happy to come, where they are really caring of each other and where we handle social interaction things ... not just with Ian, but because that is life in its making. You can't actually operate in subjects in terms of academic skills until you learn to live and work happily with people alongside you.

This philosophy was consistently translated into practice throughout both the explicit curriculum and less structured activities such as play or developmental. Jacob's teacher occasionally specified such norms, while none of the other teachers did.

### *(iii) Task structure and teacher modelling*

There was a marked difference between the ways Jonathan and Ian's teachers structured classroom tasks.

#### *(a) Ian's teacher*

Ian's teacher provided a mixture of whole-class and small group activities. During whole class activities, she modelled and talked about her academic and social expectations for different children (explaining that certain children were new and modelled how they might interact with them). Many small group activities became possible because of the way a trained teacher was employed as a teacher-aide, but actually engaged in team teaching for certain parts of the day with the teacher. Her presence (on account of Ian) resulted in more adult support and opportunities being provided for a greater number of children. Because groups of children were often working at different tasks around the room, there was little public evaluation of individuals. It is known that children are more likely to engage in verbal 'put-downs' of others in public, than they do in more private interactions (Danielewicz, Rogers & Noblit, 1996; Hatch, 1987). By the teacher and teacher-aide working as a team, they modelled and provided many opportunities for appropriate interaction in small-group situations, which limited the amount of time children engaged in public learning situations. Furthermore, whether in small or larger groups, both teacher and teacher-aide regularly changed the structure of tasks and their focus. This meant that children were not only evaluated on the quality of the end-product, but on a variety of qualities such as their effort, co-operation, initiative, compassion or enthusiasm. This allowed all the children to be successful, not only those who were capable academically.

Where partners or groups were required, the teacher and teacher-aide initially selected the pairs or groups. Only after the children were familiar with each other, the task requirements and how to interact during those tasks did the adults allow the children to select their own partners for tasks such as news or folk dancing. Ian's teacher was the only one who used social daily activities (for example, lining up to go to the library and leaving the classroom to eat lunch) as opportunities to promote inclusion. She deliberately sent particular children out at the same time who she thought would interact well. When they did, she reinforced them for including one another and reminded them of the social norms for the subsequent activity, such as looking out for

one another during play.

*(b) Jonathan and Neil's teacher*

In contrast, Jonathan and Neil's teacher regularly undertook activities with the whole class, where children had to perform publicly and were evaluated on a single criterion (for example, read out their previous day's written work or write up a word in a sentence). In these public situations, while Ian's teacher attended to multiple competencies and explained and talked about differences if children responded in unconventional ways, Jonathan's teacher did not. For example, when Jonathan's classmates saw that Jonathan needed a lot of help to read out his three-word story, which they had seen him produce with a lot of help from the teacher-aide the previous day, they evaluated his work (and him) as inferior. They queried why the teacher clapped Jonathan for his efforts at story-writing. She responded, "Because it's (story) so good." Clearly this was not how the children perceived it, otherwise the child would not have asked the question. Another child muttered "Dummy" afterwards as Jonathan walked back to his place.

When the children in this class were assigned to smaller groups, the groups were required to function independently. The children evaluated those who did not conform behaviourally or were less competent academically in the same way the teacher evaluated their own performances in the larger group. When partners were required, Jonathan and Neil's teacher used self-selection. This meant that children who were new and did not know one another, and children who were perceived as different or incompetent, were often excluded. On several occasions Jonathan, Riccardo, who spoke English as a second language (ESL) and Matthew who had a speech and language disorder were the last ones left without partners for activities.

There were also instances when the teacher paired up Jonathan or one of the children with ESL with specific classmates, but they were not shown how they might work together. For instance, on one occasion Jonathan and his partner did not do the activity (they sat and looked at one another) and on another his partner spent the entire time talking about her news item (a bangle) without inviting Jonathan's contribution and disregarding Jonathan's wandering attention. While the teacher did talk about some rules (such as listening while the other person spoke), there was

never any modelling by the teacher, discussion about what these rules meant in practice or what to do if a partner had limited expressive language or did not understand what was required. Jonathan's teacher never structured tasks or activities to facilitate inclusion, nor did she specify and enforce any social norms in a regular and consistent manner. The main message children received from the teacher was that they were to undertake tasks competently with minimal social interaction.

*(c) Mark's teachers*

Mark participated in two integrated classes for one and one-half hours each day, but there was no expectation that he and his peers would interact. During the activities, there was no structuring of tasks to promote his inclusion or that of any of the other children with identifiable impairments, apart from encouraging Mark and a willing classmate to hold hands while walking over to the building. Teacher-aides were always present with these children to ensure their participation but participation only involved engagement in tasks rather than in social networks using the task as a mediator. Because the teacher-aide always structured the situation for the children with impairments, there was never a situation where peers had to interact with these children or vice versa. For example, during news-time, the children did not have to ask Mark about his news as the teacher-aide always cued him in when it was his turn.

Overall, the data indicate that how tasks are structured and evaluated and whether or not ways of interacting and carrying out the task are specified and modelled affects inclusion. However, it is not the task structure per se that is critical, but how it is implemented. Ian's teacher used a single task structure throughout the day interspersed with smaller groups engaged in multi-task activities. When using a single-task structure however, she used multiple criteria to evaluate competence. She also modelled ways of interacting with children who were shy, new, or had limited expressive language. The evaluative climate during whole-class and single-task structure activities was different to that used in Jonathan and Neil's room where single academic, physical or other ability-related competencies were used to evaluate most activities.



#### *(iv) Playground issues and supervision*

Play and lunchtimes usually offer children more unstructured time for self-initiated activities with peers than class time. However, for young children who may have difficulties utilising this time, getting involved with their peers, problems with their peers or personal difficulties such as illness or injury, adult support needs to be readily available.

At Ian and Jacob's school, playground supervision was very thorough and a duty teacher was always in evidence amongst the junior school. On wet days, two older students supervised the new entrant classes with a duty teacher regularly overseeing each classroom. Children were able to report bullying, accidents or any other issues and know that their concerns would be attended to. Ian's teacher and teacher-aide regularly took note of what occurred in the playground and frequently discussed with the children after play and lunchtimes about issues arising and reinforced examples of positive play which they had observed while on duty. "I saw something special at lunchtime today. I saw lots of people sharing. I liked the way Connor from Room 4 shared the ball with you people."

Often, they talked with the children before play and lunch breaks about how they might utilise the time, the options available such as going to the library, the availability of the balls and they reminded the children about social norms such as looking out for one another. Such discussions and brain-storming sessions concerning social relationship issues during play and lunchtimes were not observed at any of the other schools.

Playground supervision was also thorough at Richard's school. However, Richard's supervision differed from the supervision provided for the rest of the school. He had a senior school child rostered to "mind" him during play and lunchtimes. As long as Richard and his "minder" were busy, the duty teacher left them to their own devices. This school-implemented system focused on Richard's perceived deviance instead of establishing or strengthening any existing practices to enhance children's social relationships. Instigation of this procedure assumed that all other children in the school including the new entrants had no difficulties with social relationships and therefore did not need access to processes supporting their inclusion.

Teacher-aides supervised most of the children from Mark's special class during play and lunchtimes. They ensured that the children were safe and involved in purposeful play activities, but they did not actively promote social inclusion with peers from the regular classes. The school had a system for encouraging positive social interaction where children could earn blue cards for engaging in 'positive social play' and exchange them for a small reward. This system was never explained to Mark or to the special class as a whole and Mark was not aware of its existence. Duty teachers were always visible in Mark's school, but since Mark and the other children from his class had individual aides, duty teachers had minimal contact with these children. On wet days, the children in Mark's special class stayed inside in their own room and were supervised by their special class teacher or one of the aides. These and other practices such as segregating Mark (and others with impairments) from typically developing peers for a large part of the day contributed to their isolation. Like Richard's school, Mark's school also dealt with any perceived differences at an individual rather than systems level by assigning children identified with impairments extra adult support to ensure their safety and facilitation of purposeful play activities. There were no existing practices at Mark and Richard's schools to facilitate children's social relationships at the new entrant level, which could be adapted more specifically for Mark or Richard.

A feature of Mark's school was that the school's bell to signal the end of play was often inaudible. A teacher-aide and I often queried whether or not it had rung. Mark would have been less likely to utilise the cues available, such as seeing others move inside and deduce that that therefore, it must be time to move back to class. Furthermore, since he was not considered a valued participant of any class or included in a peer group, he had no classmates or friends who cared sufficiently to inform him. The consequence of an ineffective signal for the end of lunchtime therefore had greater implications for Mark's inclusion than for the typically developing children. Mark was often chastised for not moving back to class when it seemed most unlikely that he had heard the bell.

Playground supervision for the junior area at Jonathan and Neil's school was sparse and at times, non-existent. My note-taking was frequently interrupted by situations which required immediate adult attention (for example, sickness, bullying, distress

and accidents) because no duty teacher was within close proximity. No teacher witnessed the teasing, harassment and hostile attacks used to exclude both Jonathan and Neil, the teasing, tormenting and verbal abuse of children from the satellite unit by the same group of boys, the bouts of vomiting by Neil's friend and Jonathan's fall on his first day. Children at this school hovered around me during play and lunchtimes in greater numbers and with greater frequency than at any of the other schools where duty teachers were visible and the children were mostly readily engaged in their own activities.

During wet days, a duty teacher intermittently entered Jonathan and Neil's new entrant room, but the children were largely left on their own. At times, potentially dangerous play took place when there was no supervision. When Neil was visiting for a pre-entry visit, his mother left the room briefly. During that time, several of the boys including Neil and George started an apparently friendly sword fight with long wooden blocks as follows,

George hits Neil's fingers quite hard (probably accidentally) during this activity and he cries. Neil retreats to his mother when she returns, but the boys continue the sword fights. There is no adult available to comfort Neil and redirect the boys' play.

In summary, the type of supervision at Richard, Mark and Jonathan's schools did not lend itself to implementing strategies to promote the social inclusion of all children, but particularly their new entrants and those with other identifiable differences. Where supervision that was child-focused was already in place, only some additional modifications had to be made for the child with DS. However, when the supervision was physically inadequate, it affected the inclusion of not only the child with DS (Jonathan), but also the typically developing child (Neil). When supervision consisted of individual care and protection of the child with DS, facilitative inclusion was not promoted either. In both instances, attention was not being focused on the creation of a more inclusive environment for all students and so the infrastructure necessary to incorporate additional strategies (if necessary), to facilitate the inclusion of the child with DS was lacking.

*(v) Teachers' philosophy of child development and learning: impact on practice*

While there is evidence that teachers' beliefs and attitudes relate to the practices they engage in (Agne, Greenwood & Miller, 1994; Clark & Peterson, 1986), it is important to know how teachers view development and learning for the children in their classrooms and how they translate these beliefs into practices. The situation might also arise that teachers support certain theories of learning and development, but do not know how to translate their beliefs into practices. Whether the teacher's beliefs about the children with DS differ from their beliefs about typically developing children is discussed under 'Disability-related issues' in the next section of this chapter.

Ian's teacher and teacher-aide had a holistic view of children's development, believing that attention needed to be focused on all aspects of learning. At one of Ian's transition to school meetings, the teacher talked about children including one another and having friends,

"It's part of my day. I try and bring all those things in to it. It's no use pouring reading and writing into them if they can't cope with these little things. I talk with the children about these kinds of issues."

Throughout the day, Ian's teacher and teacher-aide provided social norms for tasks, attended to children's seating arrangements, interrupted inappropriate peer responses to others (for example, excessive picking up of shorter children), discussed more appropriate responses and established shared understandings among the children. Ian's teachers also valued and nurtured children's attributes and highlighted these in front of the children. They referred to Ian's sense of compassion and his joy in folk dancing (which made him a popular partner despite errors in his performance). They also highlighted Jacob's strong interest in planting seeds during a nature study topic, Marie's ability to write her name in Greek and other children's attributes such as their quiet, sensitive nature or senses of humour. All learning of new skills was valued, whether it was learning to include one another, share, give 'News' after weeks of silence, cope with the large group at school assembly or the development or refinement of a new academic skill. Facilitation of social skills in academic contexts was also seen as important. Not only was it important for a child to learn to read, but

also to develop related social skills such as waiting for a turn and sharing a book with a partner. Ian's teachers regularly commented that they were helping certain children (including Ian) who were competent readers, develop those "surrounding behaviours" so that they could benefit from learning and participation in a group.

Jacob's first teacher felt her task was to develop the children's academic skills. She stated,

"I think because they've had a lot of time being outside at kindy and a lot of free-play and they still have 15 minutes at playtime and an hour at lunchtime.... I think it's (school time) now that they get down and do something, which possibly they're not really keen on doing but they just have to do. It is important, very important for their development.... The social side just sort of looks after itself, I find..... Most of them have been to kindy. Most of them have friends there and further up the school and in this room or coming to school."

While Jacob's teacher ran a structured academic programme, there were times within it when the children could share activities with peers. She specified social and activity norms before allocating specific children to participate in pairs or small groups at these activities. For example, while the teacher took reading instruction with one group, other pairs, groups or individuals would be working at other reading-related activities (such as matching sound and letter cards). Thus, Jacob's teacher provided opportunities for children to develop social skills within the academic programme, even if she did not articulate it or was aware that she was actually doing so.

Mark's special class teacher's focus was on the differences between the children in her special class and typically developing children. She saw her role as remediating those differences by giving priority to social skills,

"I see social skills as number one priority - getting on socially and then the academic will come. I don't get uptight about not teaching academic skills."

Observations indicated that considerably less time was devoted to academic tasks in the special class in comparison to the regular classrooms attended by the other focal children. Mark's teacher did not seem to know the kinds of processes needed for Mark's (or other children's) inclusion. While she was keen to do her best for Mark

and was open to what the early intervention staff suggested might be appropriate ways of facilitating his inclusion, she was surprised that she needed to attend to this issue.

I can see that I'm going to have to work quite hard at that one...especially after what Mary (early intervention) said yesterday.... giving him some structure to the (playground) situation. It's not just going to happen for Mark, is it?... He's just not going to find a friend and play, so I'm going to have to be very careful about that.

While she saw the importance of facilitating Mark's social development, her surprise at needing to do so indicated that she had not attended to this issue before and that it did not fit in with any existing school practices. While she stressed the importance of teaching appropriate social skills, what she meant by this was good manners, self-help skills and behaving appropriately (in a non-disabled world), not helping children with and without disabilities develop social skills, so that they could participate in more intimate forms of inclusion.

Jonathan and Neil's teacher reported a holistic approach underlying her teaching.

"It (new entrant room) has to be a very smooth transition from their preschool...they need to feel happy and confident, secure, so the whole child is very important at this stage."

However, observations indicated that her stated emphasis on "the whole child" did not translate into action. All newcomers went into the same reading or maths group and they were seated at the next vacant table irrespective of role models or the likelihood of acceptance or potential friendships. Their peer relationships and difficulties were not monitored. The teacher was also not aware of how peers understood their classmates with identifiable impairments and how the majority's negative attitudes and behaviours resulted in their exclusion. If particular children were already excluded and disliked in other contexts (these included Matthew who had a speech and language disorder, Riccardo for whom English was a second language and Jonathan), they were often ignored during potentially social activities even when the teacher permitted interaction. While Jonathan and Neil's teacher did state that in some instances it would be helpful to attend to children's social needs, she was generally hesitant about doing so for two reasons. She said,

I haven't had a lot of experience with this age group and secondly, I think it's good if it (peer relations and friendships) can happen naturally... but I imagine that there may be times when you have to do a bit of gentle manoeuvring. Some children may take a while (to make friends)...I can relate to that. I certainly would be giving them time to adjust. I wouldn't be pushing them...some need more space than others.

Jonathan and Neil's teacher lacked awareness of i) the exclusion that was occurring in the classroom and playground, ii) what she could do to facilitate positive peer relationships with a view to promoting the kinds of relationships conducive to facilitative inclusion, and iii) how her maturational theory (children need time) resulted in some children, even those with competent social skills, experiencing exclusion. She was not aware of the difference between 'pushing children into friendships' and facilitating an inclusive context in which friendships can develop.

Overall, having a teacher with a holistic view of development, which was consistently translated into practice was associated with authentic inclusion. This occurred for Ian and Jacob. In the other two case studies, there were mismatches between beliefs and practices. Mark's special class teacher believed that her main focus was developing her children's social skills, yet apart from facilitating some ball play amongst Mark and his typically developing peers on two occasions, no other situations facilitating his social inclusion were observed. The emphasis was on developing social conventions such as being polite and behaving appropriately in relation to the (non-disabled) context. Jonathan and Neil's teacher's beliefs about the importance of holistic learning were at variance with her main focus on academic skills. Her reluctance to facilitate social relationships had major implications for both Jonathan and Neil and many others in the classroom. Her actual practices played a more powerful role than her ideology.

***(vi) Transition to school practices: continuity/discontinuity?***

The transitions were handled very differently for each of the children in the study. Only one teacher made deliberate attempts to ensure continuity between school and early childhood setting.

Ian's teacher provided activities that were familiar to Ian in both home and preschool settings, such as specific songs he enjoyed, counting and reading skills he excelled at, and balls to play with at play and lunchtimes. The kinds of developmental activities similar to those found at preschool formed part of the daily programme and the teacher made explicit links between the former and latter environment. For example, during Ian's first pre-entry visit, his teacher talked with the class about the next part of the day (choosing time) as follows:

T - Class, "Now we've done our songs, what do we usually do next?"

Children call out, "Choosing."

T- Class, "Yes, it's a bit like kindy...."

Ian's teacher also regularly explained and showed new practices, equipment, activities and places that were unfamiliar to new entrants such as the hall and library and a demonstration of how to use the roller towel. She also ensured that there was not too much seat work whenever a new entrant who was very unsure about starting school arrived. Instead, she focused more on familiar interactive activities in an effort to facilitate her/his security and sense of belonging.

There was less continuity for Jacob because his teacher emphasised literacy-based activities such as writing, alphabet games and poetry charts. Jacob had spent little time at kindergarten engaging in such activities, but his family had attempted to introduce him to some table activities such as colouring, writing some letters and numbers and preschool play books which involved matching objects and joining dots on a maze. He was familiar with other aspects of the school environment. For instance, he knew a number of the children in his class and he could still play his anti-social games at play and lunchtimes. While he was not interested in many of the seat activities such as colouring, reading and printing, he did engage in them in the way intended. The children could choose which literacy activities they engaged in during particular parts of each day. For both Ian and Jacob, most new activities (such as 'newstime') were explained as were new people (principal, secretary and other teachers), materials (for instance, reading folders) and locations such as one's cubby hole, the toilets, cloakroom, principal's office, other teachers' rooms.



In contrast, Jonathan and Neil experienced considerable discontinuity from their free-choice preschool settings to a teacher-directed classroom where most of the materials, procedures and activities were different. Jonathan and Neil's early school days were full of unfamiliar new activities, which often required an advanced level of skill and knowledge. There were none of the developmental activities they were familiar with at preschool, but instead there was a strong focus on the promotion of academic skills through a teacher-directed curricula. There were more abstract and less interactive areas than at preschool (for instance, science, alphabet and computer tables as well as spaces to read poetry charts and books). There were also new activities such as fitness, sports practices and music, which were often taken by other teachers in different locations. The new entrants were expected to take part in whole school activities in unfamiliar places where it was often noisy and crowded such as assembly and whole-school singing practices. In contrast, the children in Ian and Jacob's classes were not introduced to these whole-school activities until they were more familiar with and secure in their immediate environment (several weeks after school entry). Places around the classroom such as the toilets, where specifically to hang one's bag and coat, the names of the different areas in the classroom and procedures (such as how long one could keep a school library book) were also not explained to the children or their parents. This lack of information affected both Jonathan and Neil's inclusion in different ways. Approximately two months after Jonathan's entry to school, Jonathan's mother realised for instance, that no-one had ever explained the location of the alphabet table or the different names for it to him.

I said (to Jonathan), 'put it (his toy microphone) on the 'M' table' and then I suddenly realised that he didn't know what I was talking about. The week before it was the 'R' or 'F' table or some other letter. I don't think it's for Jonathan that it didn't always click. I think Neil possibly didn't click on to it one day too. It's just little things... She (teacher) doesn't realise that this week it's (alphabet table) called one letter and next week it's something different and sometimes it's just called the alphabet table...

She was concerned about the implications of not labelling and explaining such locations to new children.

"...otherwise it looks as if they're (individual children) not doing as they're told when in actual fact, it is just that they don't know what it is they've been told."

Neil's mother expressed similar sentiments about activities and places not being explained.

They (teacher) didn't actually say, 'Here's where your bag's going to go or anything like that...I didn't know...you know, the procedures they do in the morning, or what. There wasn't much explaining there at all. Nobody showed him (Neil) where anything was, in fact...Neil likes to know what he's going to do, where he's going, that sort of thing. He doesn't like being a sheep being told to go here and do this, without knowing where and why...It makes a lot of difference to children's confidence.... (2 weeks after entry)

For both children, lack of school procedural knowledge had an impact on their inclusion, but in different ways. Neil was unhappy, burst into tears easily and frequently asked the teacher when it was time to go home. He tried to deal with his lack of understanding by asking the teacher questions, asking his mother to ask the teacher, quietly observing others and by engaging in tasks quietly in the background. Jonathan on the other hand had not yet developed these kinds of skills. He handled the lack of understanding by behaving in a boisterous manner, which was in stark contrast to his impeccable behaviour at kindergarten and home prior to school entry. His mother states,

....whereas some people might be very quiet when they're unsure, I think he's (Jonathan) gone the opposite....his behaviour has been over boisterous....His brothers and sisters just couldn't believe that he's actually doing it (disrupting others on the mat). I mean not so soon after being at school. It just seems so out of character.

Thus, while the two focal children in this classroom reacted differently to their new environment, their behaviour reflected the strangeness (discontinuity) of the new setting. Neil experienced considerable distress over the entry period, but by the end of his first term, he understood all the events, activities and situations at school. He had made a special friend and he behaved in a way similar to his behaviour at preschool (by humming, singing to himself, initiating play and engaging fully either alone or with friends in all of the activities). Jonathan however, continued to remain disconnected from the classroom activities and groups of children and took on the role of 'naughty boy'. He was unable to gain access to the many new understandings concerning the transition to school that Neil was able to acquire more easily such as by asking others or through observation. While Jonathan's mother provided some of

this information to Jonathan when she was available, his teacher and teacher-aide did not seem to be aware of the need to do so and consequently, did not do so.

Mark also experienced considerable discontinuity during his transition. The first part of his morning involved attending four different classrooms in different parts of the school involving three different groups of children. This was an atypical experience for any new entrant irrespective of schools. In Mark's school, new entrants remained in their own classroom, except for half an hour where they joined other junior children for developmental activities. Participating in four different classrooms posed considerable difficulties for Mark especially at play and lunchtime. Since he did not belong anywhere, it was difficult for both him and his peers to get to know one another sufficiently well to want to play or sit next to each other. The children from the typical classes saw him as a visitor to their classes but a member of the special class who behaved in unconventional ways. Apart from isolated incidents of being 'nice', they generally avoided him. Mark was not necessarily motivated to seek out relationships with peers. This compounded the problem, created by attending four different classes each day. With Mark's low desire to seek out peers and his participation in a school environment which lacked the ingredients necessary to get to know peers well (proximity, continuity, frequency of contact) there were insufficient conditions for the development of friendships. For example, the junior playground was a long distance away from his special class, so he could not easily play with the children there. Even if he were motivated, he would not have been able to find its location or communicate to the teacher-aide where he wanted to go. The children from the integrated class next door generally played away from the classroom area, so they were not available to him and the children from the junior and senior special classes, who were mostly older, tended to play alone or with one another. Their social skills were limited, which made it difficult for them to include Mark who tended to respond antisocially. Mark's passion was playing with cars in the sandpit. However, the sandpit was a long way away from his classroom, which made it impossible for him to get there without a teacher-aide or peers. He had no friends or familiar peers who played there, so this often precluded his participation. Furthermore, when he was there, there were usually different groups of children in the sandpit, whom he did not see in other contexts. This hindered the development of any potential relationships. Thus, unlike kindergarten where Mark experienced the

same group of children on a daily basis, at school there was an absence of such continuity.

Mark was also not used to being only amongst children with intellectual impairments for large parts of each day. He often stood looking at the other children in his segregated classes, who engaged in unconventional behaviours such as self-stimulation and making loud noises. This was very different from his kindergarten and home experiences, where he participated mostly with typically developing children. He was also able to control aspects of his learning environment at home and at kindergarten by having familiar preferred activities within his reach. At school because he was placed in a special class, which was in a different location to the new entrant area, he was often unable to access some of the activities he especially enjoyed and which could have provided opportunities for developing supportive peer connections. As mentioned earlier, the sandpit and adventure playground for instance, required an available adult or child to take him there.

The reward system in the special classes involved edibles such as sweets or an activity such as a ride on the chain tricycle in the corridor. This contrasted to kindergarten and home where the emphasis was on presenting interesting tasks to engage Mark's learning and promote social inclusion. Much to the staff's surprise, Mark often rejected or looked puzzled when he was offered sweets or chips as rewards. His family did not use them for health reasons and because they believed children should engage in an activity for its own sake.

During his daily half-hour session in the senior special class, Mark was regularly asked to do tasks that were developmentally beyond the ability of many new entrants, such as tying a skipping rope together, skipping with a rope, bouncing and catching a ball, playing grip ball. Mark often expressed his resistance by making loud noises and engaging in aversive behaviours. The tasks in both special classes were very different from the activities that children in regular classes experienced and from what Mark had experienced at kindergarten. The typically developing children at Mark's school did not experience music therapy, trips to the toy library, or one-to-one precision teaching. Experiencing such a different curriculum from his peers separated him physically and socially from his typically developing age-mates (with whom he

was used to interacting prior to school entry). Such separation during the school day meant that the only common experiences they shared were lunchtime, news-time and developmental.

Although some of the activities in his special class were similar to those Mark had experienced at preschool and home (for example, dough, Duplo, blocks, drawing), there were differences in their purposes. At kindergarten and home, they were used to develop particular concepts (for example, crayons were used for both self-initiated discovery as well as for extending learning, such as learning to write one's name) and typically developing children engaged in similar activities. At school, however, these materials were used for 'free-play' in between between the one-to-one instructional activities. These changes resulted in a different pattern of socialisation. Prior to school, the emphasis had been on providing Mark with 'normalised experiences' in regular settings. At school he was socialised into the role of a 'special needs child.' Teaching practices were framed within a special needs discourse with the focus of his educational experiences on his differences (deficits) rather than similarities with his age-mates.

In summary, Ian and Jacob experienced the greatest continuity between their early childhood and school setting in the activities, equipment and links teachers established between their new experiences and children's existing schemas. For Jacob, an additional source of continuity was the presence of supportive peers from his kindergarten. In contrast to Ian and Jacob, Jonathan and Neil experienced considerable discontinuity. Of the two, the effect was greater for Jonathan who found it more difficult to make sense of and deal with the new experiences. Mark's transition involved the greatest amount of discontinuity. Through placement in a special class with specific times for inclusion, he experienced physical and psychological isolation from his typically developing peers and socialisation into the role of a marginalised member.

## Part B

### 5.2.2: Response to Down Syndrome

The staff in the schools had particular beliefs and ways of responding to children with intellectual impairments, some of which became evident during entry to school negotiations and others during the time of the child's entry and beyond. These were shaped by the school's particular history of catering for children with impairments and by the school ethos. Both of these impacted on the principal's vision of inclusion and on the school staff's beliefs about disability. These in turn determined which professional support and ancillary staff they selected.

#### ***(i) Relationship between historical and current provisions for children with impairments: effects of the hidden curriculum***

The pertinent staff at each individual kindergarten or school held very similar beliefs about disability. They engaged in remarkably similar discourses, suggesting that they shared the same paradigm of disability.

Mark's school had a long history of catering for children with impairments by segregating them into special units or classes. While staff supported including children with impairments into regular classes, this was on the condition that "they could cope" or "were ready." There were however, no accompanying changes in their practices that would enable more children to be fully included in regular classes. The mainstreaming that took place for children from the unit classes was undertaken from a deficit model philosophy in that the child attended a regular classroom, but experienced a separate individualised programme for much of the time. The deficit model underlying segregation (remediation until the child demonstrated acquisition of more advanced skills) was applied to all children with impairments. For these children to experience less restrictive settings, they needed to demonstrate improved levels of performance.

While the staff were willing to implement the suggestions made by the early intervention staff and did so on two occasions, they seemed unaware that the school's disability practices were based on a contradictory philosophy of disability. Facilitation was impeded by the school's historic philosophy focusing on the 'deficit'

child. This was highlighted by the decision to give Mark a ball at lunchtime. Only children who would play with Mark had access to 'his' ball. This strategy failed because: 1) the children attracted to the ball were not necessarily interested in Mark, 2) Mark was not enthusiastic about boisterous ball activities, which his peers enjoyed, and 3) the children drawn to the ball did not establish and share the common ground necessary for a developing relationship, which was the aim of the activity. Mark did however, enjoy rolling the ball with a peer on one occasion.

Wider issues, such as the continuity of opportunities for meaningful peer relationships and the structuring of lunchtime to provide greater inclusion for all pupils were not addressed.

Another way the children with impairments who attended the special units or classes were constructed as deviant was through allowing them special privileges denied to those in the regular classes. These attractive privileges such as the exclusive use of chain tricycles, pedal cars and balls in the playground at lunch time helped convey a charity attitude towards these children. This perpetuated the historic message (Hunt, 2000) that these children needed "treats" (these attractive toys) to compensate for their tragic/sad circumstances (their impairments).

Jonathan's school had a satellite class from a special school on its site. Jonathan's principal valued this unit greatly describing it as "very successful" because it gave children the "best of both worlds" - the specialised teaching (in the unit) and the social side with the others (mainstream)." He viewed children with impairments as more different than like their peers by requiring separate tuition. The principal from the special school overseeing the unit held the same deficit model of disability. She was resistant to inclusion and had a strong influence on Jonathan's principal and staff. While Jonathan's principal and teacher were willing to support inclusion or mainstreaming as they called it, their vision of what an inclusive classroom and school might look like was limited to a child assimilating into the existing context. The onus was on the child with the disability (and the child's family) to cope within the existing classroom and school culture. If the child did not cope, solutions were sought on the 'deficit' model such as applying for more teacher-aide hours,

("...teacher, teacher-aide hours, I'll grab the lot if I can." (principal)), or encouraging the parents to enrol the child into more restrictive settings.

"It's their (parents) choice to mainstream, but if I get a child in the mainstream and we reach a point where we can't cope, we'll have to tell the parents, 'We can't cope'."

The principal reported that the school's charter had an exclusive clause in it that involved providing the best quality of education "within our resources."

"We've got that reservation in there 'of within our resources'. If we don't have the resources....then we just have to admit that we really can't have them."

Employing exclusive practices based on a deficit philosophy mitigated against the provision of inclusive practices, something Jonathan and his family experienced at all levels (academic, social and philosophical). For instance, lowered expectations of Jonathan's reading were based on mistrust of his mother's report of his actual ability. While the staff welcomed Jonathan and his family on his entry to the school, this welcome did not extend to accepting their cultural perspectives. This became evident when the school staff resisted strongly all suggestions his family and support group (early intervention) made to incorporate power-sharing practices. For instance, the schools resisted in agreeing to a meeting where purposeful discussion concerning Jonathan's educational experiences might have led to mutually satisfying decisions. Such resistance usually stemmed from the belief that the principal and teachers understood how schools work and therefore any challenges to the status quo were considered "unrealistic." The school saw the deficit model of difference as the 'common-sense' blueprint for its *modus operandi*.

Ian's school had no history of units or special classes and they had no existing relationships with special education as Mark and Jonathan's schools did. Within recent years, they had used a 'normalised' approach to include another child with developmental delay. This child was now in the senior school and they saw his inclusion as a valued class and school participant as extremely successful. The school's handbook had an inclusive statement underneath its name stating,

"Where all children are encouraged to reach their full potential."



The principal, teacher and teacher-aide strongly believed in a school culture that welcomed and celebrated all kinds of differences. Their practices were consistent with their inclusive discourse prior to and throughout Ian's first term. They were open to sharing their power with Ian's parents and their support agency (the early intervention programme) and constantly evaluated their practices in the light of their philosophy. They spent considerable time with Ian's parents (who were extremely knowledgeable about their son, disability theory, the philosophy and practice of inclusive education and how DS impacts on learning), and the early intervention staff. Ian's school was the only institution that examined existing school practices and structures and modified them to accommodate a wider range of learners. They did not see additional resources or the lack of them as a barrier to providing an effective learning environment for Ian. The principal said,

No, it's (extra resources) not an issue.....In this case (Ian), the whole process has been done in such a way that we know we're doing the right thing, as much as we can know these things....I applaud their (Ian's parents) desire to have him (Ian) integrated in an environment like this.

Suggestions made by the early intervention team, parents or the kindergarten were incorporated within regular classroom activities in a way that changed the general culture of the classroom to becoming more inclusive as opposed to making a particular alteration specifically for Ian. For example, the teacher introduced balls at lunch and play times as well as specifying inclusive norms for their use, as opportunities for facilitating the inclusion of all new entrants. Unlike the trial of a similar strategy in Mark's school, in Ian's school, they were not an exclusive provision for Ian on account of his potential social difficulties. Instead, while the activity was instigated with Ian's interest and potential social difficulties in mind, because it was targeted at the group instead of at the individual level, it improved the range of opportunities for inclusion to encompass a greater number of children including Ian. In Mark's school, the exclusionary majority culture remained intact and Mark remained marginalised.

From the way disability was constructed in Ian's school, children received the message that Ian's differences (like all children's differences) were valued and accommodated. However, they were merely aspects of his total being in the way

gender, ethnicity and other attributes are. The teacher helped children discover both similarities and differences, which peers could relate to and these enabled meaningful connections with peers to take place.

Like Ian's school, Richard's school also had no history of special units or classes and had few children with impairments. The principal and teacher were willing to alter practices to support Richard's inclusion and they spent considerable time liaising with the early intervention team, his kindergarten and family to educate themselves about how to optimally do so. However, all the information gleaned was interpreted and implemented within a deficit discourse of difference that emphasised the tragedy of Richard's disability and an ethos of Christian charity. Richard's teacher reported,

All I noticed the time I was there (at the early intervention programme)...you don't really think too much about Down Syndrome, but when you see three or four in a group, you realise how lucky the other children are - the ones I teach, how fortunate they are.

The discourse of difference was evident throughout the interviews and observations. Richard's teacher and principal regularly referred to Richard's differences as if they were all-encompassing and that he shared nothing in common with his classmates. That Richard was viewed as 'other' is evident in the following comments,

If I didn't have teacher-aide time, I'd find it (including Richard) very hard, particularly if I'm trying to teach the other 31.....at this time of year, there are stages that you want the children to reach and if I spend time with Richard, I would not be able to do my job properly. (teacher)

I think basically, like any teacher's concern is 'How are we going to teach everyone, plus Richard?' (principal)

Although this school was relatively new to including children with impairments and had no prior history of special classes or units on site, the teacher and principal's beliefs and practices reflected the commonly-held historic view of disability being an all-encompassing attribute requiring different teaching methods, expertise and school practices. The result of the school staff adopting this personal tragedy/individual deficit perspective was that their practices were based on these beliefs which in turn led to Richard's class and schoolmates internalising the same philosophy and practices. Peers viewed Richard as not like them on account of his tragedy/loss to

which they responded by being extra kind and caring. They genuinely seemed to like and value Richard but it was as a lower status and deviant member rather than an equal.

### *(ii) Principal's role in inclusion*

Research has consistently shown that principals play a pivotal role in the success or otherwise of any reforms such as inclusion (Biklen, 1985; Rex, 2000), the implementation of bilingual programmes (Jacques, 1991) or technology (Stegall, 1998).

Only Ian's principal had a clear understanding of what an inclusive school might look like. He took proactive steps to ensure that his school provided a quality learning environment for all children and to ensure Ian's entry and education were as 'normal' as possible. He saw Ian as another pupil with some differences affecting his learning which could be accommodated by changing aspects of the school's culture. He supported adapting existing school procedures to make them more responsive to a greater variety of children, including Ian. During the meetings, he politely turned down offers of help or suggestions that focused exclusively on highlighting Ian's differences (for example, an offer from the kindergarten head teacher to talk to the staff about Ian and his disability). In contrast, Richard's principal left the wider system unchanged, but in conjunction with Richard's teacher supported procedures specifically for Richard's individual 'needs' (for example, attaching an older child to 'mind' him during play and lunchtimes). She did not position Richard as another new entrant like Ian's principal but in the category 'other.'

"The issue that concerned me was that he (Richard) was entering a new entrant class which already had 30 children in it and how much teacher time this would divert from the other children."

Jonathan's principal was reactive. He did not support changing existing procedures on the basis that the deficit model was the common-sense way of responding to learning difficulties as well as it forming part of New Zealand's educational philosophy.

“If a kid is failing in maths, you do something about it. That’s the basic philosophy of the New Zealand education system. The kid has a particular need, then you have to meet it.”

This principal’s approach to the education of children with impairments in regular classes was to obtain the maximum number of teacher-aide hours to implement a separate programme catering for the child’s individual ‘needs’ within the existing class programme. He consistently positioned Jonathan as a member of the disabled group in the school, using a divisive discourse, for example,

“My only concern with Jonathan or any other mainstreamed child....”

None of the principals was averse to enrolling the children with DS, but their levels of confidence varied. Ian’s principal was confident about Ian’s inclusion and the direction the process was heading. He listed many benefits from including children with impairments for the entire school community. In contrast, Jonathan’s principal saw few benefits, the main one being,

“The best outcome for Jonathan and all the other handicapped kids will be the attitude and acceptance of him by the other kids and their acquisition of good social skills.”

He saw few positive outcomes for staff.

“I suppose basically to gradually improve the way they do it. I don’t really see much else.”

Jonathan’s principal was fearful. He was anxious about the lack of ancillary hours being provided by the Ministry of Education, the potentially negative effect of including children like Jonathan on the learning of other children and the teachers’ stress levels.

“I have to watch the effect (of the child with disability) on the other kids, the teachers and then I’ve got to watch parents’ reactions. You walk the tightrope all the way.”

He was also concerned that the teachers were not trained in special education and that the parents of typically developing children might complain to him that their children's learning was being jeopardised,

“My greatest fear of mainstreaming is that we will get a backlash from parents if they feel that their kid is missing out...there are definitely some who are watching the situation.”

Richard's principal was uncertain rather than fearful or confident. She was very welcoming and accepting of Richard, but indicated that she was very unfamiliar with what was involved in “mainstreaming” and that she had a lot to learn,

“I think very much my role is one of being educated – learning from the experience. I think we've (school) got a pretty positive attitude and we're pretty open.”

Because of her uncertainty about what inclusion involved, she accepted all offers of help, which stemmed from both divisive and inclusive philosophies. She lacked discernment about what contributed to Richard's inclusion and what did not.

### *(iii) Employing a teacher-aide*

The principals' different philosophies were reflected in the attributes they prioritised when hiring a teacher-aide to support the child/class/teacher. In line with his philosophy of keeping Ian's entry to school as ‘normal’ as possible, Ian's principal requested for a trained teacher instead of an untrained teacher-aide or a teacher-aide with qualifications in special education. The ‘teacher-aide’ had to have the same philosophy on disability and inclusion as the class teacher, Ian's parents and himself and her role was to team teach with the teacher. Because Jonathan's principal viewed Jonathan's delayed development as his main focus, he centred on ensuring the maximum amount of ancillary hours from the Ministry of Education. He employed a teacher-aide with experience and qualifications in special rather than regular education. Jonathan's teacher-aide had no background in teaching and had been the teacher-aide for the other mainstreamed children with DS. She had recently completed a certificate in special needs. This course reflected a deficit view of disability, (see Christchurch College of Education, 1993) and Jonathan's teacher-aide shared her enthusiasm about the behavioural techniques she had learnt with the

principal. He was concerned that the regular class teacher had not been trained to teach children with impairments. He was delighted with the extra training Jonathan's teacher-aide had done and the specialist expertise she had acquired.

"She has put the time herself into A.S.T. stuff (Advanced Studies in Teaching Papers from the College of Education) and possibly she has more skills than many of our teachers...."

Richard's teacher-aide was a trained teacher prepared to take on the position for a teacher-aide's wage. However, unlike Ian's principal, Richard's principal did not require her to have a particular philosophy of disability or work in an inclusive way. Like the other teacher-aides in the study, this teacher-aide provided extra support and tuition to Richard alone, although it was usually within the classroom context.

#### *(iv) Principal's support for the staff and parents*

The principals supported the staff and parents in different ways. Ian's principal supported the teacher and parents equally.

I believe I can do a lot I believe to make sure that his (Ian's) parents find it easy to approach the school and establish and maintain whatever dialogue is necessary and make them understand that their concerns won't be considered grizzles even if they come one day after the other.

He also supported the teacher by being aware of what was going on.

I can't practically do very much (in the classroom), but I can at least give my support by at least being a sympathetic ear, by facilitating whatever action the teacher might see necessary whether it's providing a gate swing lock, whether it's providing an extra ball for the classroom or anything at all that can help. I guess the thing is keeping an ear to the ground really and try to be aware. There might be needs which aren't apparent in an ordinary classroom and be ready for them when they arise.

Another way Ian's principal supported inclusion was by ensuring class numbers in Ian's class were lower than they would normally would be. The other principals were either unable to adjust class numbers or did not prioritise adjusting class numbers to facilitate the entry of the child with DS to the school.

Ian's principal was the only one who ensured that all involved with Ian's transition to school shared the same philosophy of teaching and learning and disability before utilising their services. This issue is outlined more fully in the next section. He also took the lead in promoting this philosophy to those associated with the school (Board of Trustees, parents, and other teachers within the school).

Jonathan's principal was less clear about what an inclusive classroom might look like. He supported the teacher when she complained about Jonathan's disruptive influence, but failed to help her address the issues underlying Jonathan's behaviour, which were the source of the parent's concerns. This alienated both the principal and teacher from Jonathan's parents. When the latter approached the principal with their concerns about Jonathan's lack of academic gains, exposure to poor role models and ongoing exclusion from peer groups, he dismissed their concerns in favour of supporting the teacher by telling them, "He's (Jonathan) got an excellent teacher." In his interview he regularly indicated that Jonathan's parents had unrealistic expectations of Jonathan's abilities and what schools could realistically do for children like Jonathan.

Richard's principal, like Ian's supported the teacher and parents in their focus on Richard's assimilation into the existing school culture. Neither principal nor teacher interpreted the information they obtained from professionals as relating to the wider school culture. The principal at Richard's school tried to lead a major reform (inclusion) without the knowledge she needed or any understanding that she needed to change the school's culture.

Mark's principal was ill at the time the study took place and was therefore not interviewed. However, the school's handbook stated that, "We try to mainstream as many of our children with special needs as possible," indicating (by the word, "try") that unconditional mainstreaming was not the policy. The presence of two special classes for children with intellectual impairments and a special unit for those with another category of impairment suggested that there was no clear commitment to, or understanding of facilitative inclusion. The children in the schools' segregated settings were clearly not viewed as an integral part of the total school roll as evidenced by the following statement in the handbook,

“At present the roll is approximately 183, plus 23 disabled pupils and 9 special class pupils...”

In summary, the leadership the school principals provided reflected their philosophy on disability. It permeated through all aspects of the school, the quality of parental support and the philosophy espoused and implemented by the classroom teachers. Only one principal (Ian's) had a clear vision of inclusion not based on the deficit model. He educated himself by liaising closely with Ian's family, the early intervention team whom the family requested be involved, and seeking out relevant reading from these sources. He was open to examining school practices that acted as potential barriers to Ian's (and others') inclusion. Taking a proactive stance was based on awareness of the difference in philosophy and practice between inclusion and traditional special education. On the other hand, Richard, Mark and Jonathan's principals were unaware of this distinction and included children with impairments in regular classes utilising the same philosophy and practices underlying special education. They saw them as fundamentally deviant children who needed extra teacher-aide hours and staff trained in special education to provide the necessary pedagogical expertise to remedy their deficits.

***(v) Professional support staff: alignment with whom?***

The most common form of professional support available to schools was from the Special Education Service in the form of an educational psychologist. An itinerant mainstream support teacher based at a special school was available to Richard and Jonathan's schools, but not to Ian's as they were disestablished at the time.

Mark and Jonathan's psychologists targeted the children's deficits instead of recommending that the school engage in more inclusive practices. Despite their lack of knowledge of Mark or Jonathan, their classrooms or families, they proceeded to fill in the necessary forms highlighting each child's deficits in order to obtain the maximum number of teacher-aide hours (from a limited pool) for them. For example, at Mark's first IEP meeting, when a regular class teacher complained about Mark “getting lost” at developmental time, his psychologist immediately suggested,

“We could apply for teacher-aide hours. Would an hour a day be sufficient?”



At the conclusion of the meeting, the psychologist concluded,

“Let’s hope we can get those (teacher-aide) hours.”

She never raised the issue of how the context might be altered to facilitate Mark’s inclusion.

Mark’s special class teacher was a part-time itinerant support professional for children with intellectual impairments. She was trained in special education and visited children attending nearby schools for remedial work for the first two hours each day. She reflected the same individual deficit perspective as the psychologist. While she was open to the suggestions made by the early intervention staff, none were (and could not be) successfully implemented. Mark’s teacher did not seem to be aware of the philosophical differences between the early intervention team, herself, the support staff most commonly utilised by the school (such as the psychologist), and the practices at the school. She felt fortunate in having the expertise of so many special education professionals available and did not discriminate in her use of them. All were seen as equally helpful.

Ian’s teacher, teacher-aide, principal and parents did not find the psychologist’s views helpful or in line with their vision of inclusion. Because of their unfavourable experiences prior to the transition, Ian’s parents did not enlist the psychologist’s involvement at school entry. After the psychologist visited the classroom several weeks after Ian’s school entry, the teacher, teacher-aide and principal decided not to use the psychologist’s services again. Ian’s kindergarten head teacher was eager to offer her services to speak to the entire school staff about “Ian, the child and his disability” (transition meeting). However, the principal and teacher perceived this would focus on his ‘differences/deficits,’ which was not in keeping with their philosophy. The principal therefore did not take up the offer.

“We’d do that if we feel that was necessary... The natural thing to do if things are not going well - the first place to go is back to Susan and Bill, the parents”.... and a comment about “going to the experts later.”

Apart from the transition meeting, Jonathan's psychologist was never involved. The school used an itinerant mainstream support teacher with a strong deficit focus who had a long history of teaching in special schools. Her perspective was the same as Jonathan's classroom teacher, teacher-aide, principal and principal of the special school overseeing the school's satellite class. Even though the school never asked the parents' permission for her involvement, and despite their reluctance, the school supported her work and philosophy of disability not only for Jonathan, but also for other children she was involved with in the school. Jonathan's teacher described her as,

“...very wise – she's done an extra year's training in special needs..... she's been my mentor as well as a great help....she's very good to me as a support” (final interview).

Jonathan's teacher and principal were concerned about the perspectives of Jonathan's parents and the early intervention staff, which challenged the deficit view and involved addressing the school contexts. The teacher stated,

I think there's a real gap in reality between what early intervention can do and think can be done for Jonathan in the classroom.... they're not practical. That's where Wendy (itinerant mainstream support teacher) is good because she can see the overall picture (Jonathan's deficits).

The principal and teacher rejected the professional expertise the family valued (early intervention team) in favour of the professionals whose philosophy was more closely aligned with their own philosophy.

5.2.3: Summary (Existing Practices and Children with Perceived Intellectual Impairments): The structures already in place in the classroom and school had a strong influence on inclusion and the opportunities for inclusion for all the focal children (DS and typically developing). Schools with a history of segregating children with impairments (Mark and Jonathan's) had a strong deficit view of disability, which was reflected in their choice of professional and practical support, the degree to which they accepted responsibility for the child in the face of adversity and their (un)willingness to examine existing school procedures. Aspects of this focus (the individual deficit philosophy) were also present at Richard's school where they had little experience of children with impairments. Richard's school focused

mostly on the tragedy aspect of his ‘differences’ and responded with benevolent care and protection. Both teacher and principal at Richard’s school were prepared to change the school’s culture to be more accommodating, but they seemed unaware that many of their existing practices reinforced the deficit/tragedy aspect of disability.

At Ian’s school, there were already a number of practices in place, which catered for the heterogeneity in children attending the school. Unlike the other schools, none of these practices was deficit-based. In conjunction with Ian’s family and support group (early intervention), they extended their existing practices which were sensitive to the needs of children, by developing a shared philosophy on disability which focused on the provision of a non-disabling context in which Ian could learn. Thus the school and family together decided not to use ‘support’ agencies or individuals who did not adhere to their shared philosophy. This clearly required a sound knowledge base, a clear vision of what inclusive education entailed and no historical impediments such as existing special classes or units on site with specialist professionals with vested interests in them.

## **SECTION 2**

### **5.3: Classroom/School Practices in Response to Focal Child**

In Section 1, I described aspects of each school’s existing practices and structures, which impacted on each child’s opportunities at being authentically included. In Section 2, I examine more specifically what schools did in response to the entry of the focal children. The practices investigated are the role of the teacher and teacher-aide, and aspects pertaining to social relationships. More specifically, the practices in the latter category involve: i) attention to social relationships, ii) classroom seating, iii) the promotion of social interactions, iv) responses to inappropriate behaviour, v) management of the focal child’s anti-social behaviour, vi) dealing with differences, vii) the focus when issues arise: the individual or context and viii) the positioning of the child as an insider or outsider. Each is discussed in turn.

### 5.3.1: Role of Teacher and Teacher-aide

The way many children with impairments are supported in New Zealand schools is by assigning them a teacher-aide (usually a non-trained teacher) for a certain amount of time per day. It is often an unstated assumption that the teacher will hand over responsibility for the child to the teacher-aide who will provide one-to-one tuition on individualised learning objectives. Educators are often keen to obtain as many teacher-aide hours for the child as possible (Rietveld, 1989) on the assumption that the more one-to-one teaching that can be made available, the more learning will take place.

In Richard, Mark and Jonathan's schools, teacher-aides were responsible solely for the child they were assigned to, acting mostly as an individual teacher for the child within the classroom. Both Richard's teacher and teacher-aide understood the allocated time was to be used exclusively for facilitating Richard's learning objectives and that she was responsible for him during that time while the teacher was responsible for the rest of the class. The teacher said,

"I just don't worry about him (Richard) when she's (teacher-aide) there which is from ..."

Because Richard was seen as not capable of participating in aspects of classroom activities ("...the children here spend three quarters of an hour or an hour at a story and he can't do that...." - teacher), adaptations often focused on providing him with a separate programme. Richard's teacher-aide engaged him in a variety of tasks, some of which were the same as his peers and others which were markedly different (for example, outdoor physical activities while the class undertook seat work). There was no such individualisation for any other child in the class.

Mark had a teacher-aide present for each developmental period. She usually worked together with him on an activity while most other children worked in pairs or groups with one another. Mark's special class teacher suggested that the teacher-aide could facilitate Mark's inclusion with a small group of familiar peers at developmental, but the teacher-aide was never observed doing so. The other teacher-aides allocated to Mark's room also worked with him individually. Both Mark and Jonathan's teacher-aides used behavioural techniques typically associated with special education and

precision teaching (Gerston, Woodward & Darch, 1986; Singh & Ahrens, 1980). These included the use of sweets and potato chips as rewards (Jonathan and Mark), task analysis, short periods of withdrawal for separate programmes and the use of time-out. The goal of such teaching was the remediation of deficits.

The teacher-aide (trained teacher) in Ian's school was employed specifically to work with a small group of children including Ian. Her role was very clearly specified and involved team-teaching with the teacher for certain parts of the day.

Well, the Head and I talked about it when he first appointed me and he said it was an integration programme bearing in mind that I am here for Ian, but that was why I came down and did a lot of work in the classroom before he came because I didn't want to find Ian and myself arrive together....he is one of the group and I mean...this is what life's all about....we'd be doing him a disservice if I sat and was absolutely his shadow all day, every day...I try to help as many of the other children around as well.

Ian's teacher-aide was the only one observed facilitating Ian and others' social inclusion and with his teacher used a more constructivist approach to teaching (Lave & Wenger, 1999; Rogoff, 1990). This involved assisting children's performance in meaningful and authentic contexts rather than developing skills in an individual linear sequence and insisting that the successful mastery of basic skills is essential for more advanced forms of thinking and learning. She was responsible for groups of children, which included Ian, although there was flexibility in this arrangement.

### 5.3.2: Social Relationships

#### ***(i) Attention to social relationships***

Of the four teachers, only Ian's teacher and teacher-aide attended to Ian and his classmates' social relationships in a way that promoted equal status, mutually reciprocal interactions. Richard's teacher promoted unequal relationships between Richard and his classmates as she positioned his peers in roles such as mini-teachers and caretakers. Mark's teacher rarely attended to this issue and when she did, her practices focused on Mark in isolation from the peer culture. Jonathan's teacher did not focus on this issue.

It will be recalled from Section 1 that Ian's teacher and teacher-aide already attended to children's social relationships prior to Ian's arrival. They specified social norms, attended to seating arrangements in class and during lunch and helped children deal with issues arising in their relationships. For Ian, they extended these practices. They placed Ian's desk amidst a group of children (mostly boys) who shared similar interests and who were generally competent, sensitive and well-liked in the class. Most of these children were also in Ian's maths and reading groups.

Ian's teacher and teacher-aide also used strategies to increase these children's contact with each other by dismissing them at the same time for play and lunch times and reinforcing their inclusion of one another. Both teacher and teacher-aide often structured tasks so that children were required to engage in activities with partners, particularly at the beginning of Ian's time in the class. For example, during a library visit, the teacher asked Ian and a peer in his group (Elliot) to select a book.

T to Elliot, "Could you help Ian find a book?" Elliot and Ian go to the shelf, Ian selects one and Elliot brings it back.

T to Elliot, "Could you share that book with Ian?"

Ian and Elliot look at the book together, verbalising, laughing and smiling together.

T to Class, "I'd like you all to share (a book) with a friend."

Ian's teacher used his inclusion as an opportunity to be more aware of the children's social relationships overall with a view to facilitating developmentally-enhancing relationships of all members.

The teacher and teacher-aide also introduced a play activity during play and lunchtimes, which capitalised on Ian's strengths (ball skills) but had as its aim the social inclusion of all children who wished to be involved. The principal agreed to the purchase of two balls for each of the junior classrooms for this purpose. Initially the teacher-aide helped set up or maintain situations in which the children could experience successful interactions with one another around the ball. Later on, as the children internalised what was required, she withdrew her involvement. She did however, as did the teacher, continue to monitor the quality of inclusion by intermittently reinforcing their participation, using inclusive strategies as well as dealing with any issues arising, such as older children taking over the balls.

Ian's teacher and teacher-aide were the only teachers who helped facilitate friendships out-of-school by mentioning to Ian's parents the names of children whose company Ian preferred. They believed that inclusion into the wider community was an important development from inclusion at school.

I look for the time when perhaps someone will invite him (Ian) to go home or perhaps Ian's mother will invite someone to go home and I wonder whether we should suggest or discuss it when we speak with Ian's Mum which I think is next Monday. I think it could be fostered. (teacher)

The teacher did discuss the issue with Ian's parents and play dates occurred at Ian's home and at various of his friend's homes.

Jacob's teacher also attended to his social inclusion on his entry to school, by ensuring that he had a 'friend' during all unstructured parts of the day. However, it did not take long for him to develop his own pool of friends.

As discussed in Section 5.2.2: i, (Relationships between historical and current provisions for children with impairments), the use of a ball to facilitate social relationships in Mark's class failed. Nothing was done to ensure that Mark and his peers enjoyed interacting with each other in the shared activity. While some momentary episodes of social interaction took place with random children, this procedure did not lead to Mark's belonging to a dyad or group as it did with Ian. First, it would appear that targeting the individual (Mark) instead of the school's practices is one reason why the strategy failed. Another important reason why the strategy failed was that no-one ensured that the activity was successful for Mark and his peers. Difficulty of the ball activity chosen by his peers was not monitored, Mark lost interest and the social interaction terminated. Neither Mark nor his peers experienced sufficient success or enjoyment to motivate their repeating the activity. The children with whom Mark could have been included were not personally known to the teacher or teacher-aide and did not normally play in the locality frequented by Mark. The fact that the ball was introduced for Mark's benefit meant that it was a novelty, and not general playground equipment. The result was that the children's

focus of interest was their choice of ball activity rather than the ball being a means to participation in a socially inclusive enjoyable experience.

The school's deficit philosophy further mitigated against inclusion for Mark as his peers' sense of charity was appealed to, rather than their being provided with an inclusion-based framework within which they could develop an equal-status relationship with Mark. Mark's own preferences were overlooked in selecting an activity to promote his inclusion, thus denying him a chance to be seen by his peers in a competent role. Finally, structural barriers are likely to have affected the outcomes. Tentative social interactions were impeded by the segregation of Mark's peers into a variety of junior classes, each with its own play area and a lack of ongoing teacher-assisted support to enable relationships to be developed and sustained. The significance of this was displayed in the incident of Mark and a female peer with whom he engaged in a brief, animated game of ball-rolling. After she left to go to her classroom, he stayed sitting on the concrete pointing to where she had been sitting, loudly saying, "There!" (probably meaning, "Come back to play and sit there!") before sighing and hanging his head down low. He had no way of knowing who she was and where he might find her again. Segregation of Mark from the children with whom he could have become integrated, made inclusion impossible.

### *(ii) Classroom seating*

For the three boys with DS and Neil, desk placement played a significant role in terms of their inclusion or exclusion. Jacob was the only one who was not affected by desk placement (only one child at his table was in his peer group), yet he still experienced inclusion in a peer group.

Ian's teacher and teacher-aide carefully selected a group of children for Ian's table who had similar interests, were generally well-liked, behaved appropriately and would easily learn how to include Ian as an equal status member. By doing so, they reported that they were providing some of the ingredients necessary for his belonging to a group or developing friendships (for example, proximity, frequency of contact, greater opportunities for developing shared meanings). Jonathan, Neil, and Jacob's teachers did not attend specifically to desk placement and assigned the next vacant desk. Mark was not assigned a specific desk, but allotted a vacant one when required.



The children at Jonathan's table provided poor role models. Most exhibited challenging behaviours, their friendships with one another seemed already solidified and they were generally suspicious or rejecting of Jonathan. Their interests also differed. Neil was surrounded by a group of girls at his table. While he was amicably included in their conversations during seat work, neither they nor Neil sought one another out during free-choice times. It was difficult for Neil to get to know the boys who were mostly seated at Jonathan's table and formed an already-established close-knit group who were resistant to new-comers.

***(iii) Promotion of interactions: joint activity or "special favour"?***

An essential pre-requisite to genuine friendship (level 2 inclusion) is a relationship based on reciprocity, in which both participants give and receive. Inclusion based only on one child helping and the other receiving is unlikely to lead to friendship unless there is a shift in the balance of power. When teachers reinforce children for their kind favours and acts to the child with DS, this shift may never come about.

Ian's teacher and teacher-aide focused on shared meanings and balance of power joint interaction and activity rather than reward one child (the child with majority status) for joint activity with the other (the child with minority status). For example, Ian's teacher reinforced Ian and Erin playing at the dough table by saying, "It's nice to see you play together" (reinforcing joint interaction) and "Erin and Ian, what beautiful cakes you have made! Are they cooked?" (reinforcing their joint activity). This was in marked contrast to how Mark's teacher interacted with Mark. She asked a girl to play with Mark as a favour,

"If you're not too busy, would you mind playing with Mark?"

Mark's teachers saw typically developing children interacting with Mark or other children from the unit as a special favour, thus accentuating the distinction between children. Similarly, Richard's peers were also praised for their inclusion of Richard, although they were reprimanded for helping him with tasks he could easily do independently and for sharing his pleasure when he misbehaved (for instance, laughing with him during class time when he took a bite from his apple and hid his head behind his raised desk lid).

Jonathan's teacher did nothing to promote any peer interaction between Jonathan and his classmates.

*(iv) Response to inappropriate peer behaviour to child with DS*

Young children do not automatically know how to appropriately include someone who might look, behave and respond differently. At times, the children with DS exhibited more immature ways of moving, communicating and behaving and their peers responded by treating them as a much younger or lower status member.

Ian's teacher and teacher-aide were the only ones to interrupt inappropriate peer behaviour to Ian. For example, Ian's teacher commented that several times she had noted the children treating Ian as a much younger child (for example, by picking him up and excessive hugging)

“...a lot of them were treating him like a little person without being aware of it.”

On an occasion when this kind of behaviour occurred, the teacher reported talking to the class as follows:

“Ian has got one Mummy and he doesn't need lots of Mummies to look after him. He needs lots of friends. He's not your little brother...he's just the same age as you are and he needs you to be his friend.”

Ian's teacher and teacher-aide seemed to have an awareness of factors which interfered with mutually satisfying reciprocal relationships and discussed these with the class or individuals as they arose, suggesting ways for the children and Ian to accommodate one another. For instance, during Ian's first few days of school, he would often hug or hit at inappropriate times. The teacher and teacher-aide talked with the children about this situation.

“Sometimes he (Ian) doesn't understand when it's the right time to touch you and when it isn't. He doesn't always understand.”

Alex to Teacher, “Today I gave him a big hug.”

Teacher-aide to Alex, “I know you did, sweetheart.”

Teacher to Class, “If you don't feel like being hugged, you could say, ‘I like you Ian (or Susan)’, but I don't want a hug right now.”

Ian's teacher and teacher-aide also interrupted any incidents of overt exclusion such as denial of access to the family corner. She dealt with the reasons underlying the exclusion, so that when Erin complained that she did not want Ian present because, "We can't understand you...", the teacher talked through the issue with Erin and her friends. She highlighted some of Ian's competencies and facilitated the play for a while, ensuring that it was mutually successful for all involved. Mark and Jonathan's peers engaged in the same type of inappropriate behaviours with them as Ian's peers did with him (invading body space, treatment as an object). However, Mark and Jonathan's teachers and teacher-aides did not interrupt such responses or talk with the children about the behaviour and how they might respond more appropriately. Jonathan's teacher, teacher-aide or duty teacher were usually not present when such instances occurred in the playground. Exclusion was also occurring in the classroom (for example, denial of access to books), and this also was never responded to. In the classroom, his teacher regularly chastised Jonathan for engaging in inappropriate behaviour but rarely noticed his classmates prompting this behaviour by their treating him as an object or much younger member. Jonathan clearly detested this, but since most of his peers ignored his more conventional responses, he had little other option than to resort to using more physical means of communication in order to be heard.

Richard's teacher was aware that children often did too much for him and she tried to stop them. However, this made little difference to them.

Overall, Ian's school was the only one aware of what constituted appropriate and inappropriate peer relationships. They regularly discussed inappropriate and appropriate behaviour as incidents occurred and they interrupted inappropriate responding. The teachers and teacher-aides at Mark and Jonathan's schools appeared to lack such awareness. Inappropriate responding by peers was mostly ignored. Richard's teacher interrupted responses where children took over tasks that Richard was capable of, but her comments had little effect.

#### ***(v) Management: response to focal child's anti-social behaviour***

Anti-social behaviour was a common reason given by children for not including others, irrespective of DS. Two children (Ian and Mark) arrived at school with behaviours their classmates found aversive (for example, pushing, hitting, taking

items from, making loud noises, resisting classroom norms). Jonathan never engaged in such behaviours at kindergarten or on his immediate entry to school, but increasingly engaged in such behaviours as the term proceeded. Each of the teachers responded differently to the child's aversive behaviours.

Ian's teacher and teacher-aide were willing to implement strategies suggested by the early intervention team so as to prevent Ian from engaging in the inappropriate behaviours he displayed at kindergarten. For example, he was encouraged to sit near the front of the mat under the teacher's surveillance and away from distracting stimuli. He was praised for sitting up straight and attending to tasks. If he did not, he was physically prompted and then praised. If he attempted to hit, push or kick others, his actions were immediately interrupted, redirected and the appropriate behaviour was briefly explained to him and reinforced, for example, "This is how we sit at school." As Ian's behaviours rapidly improved, they did not need to devote as much attention to the prevention of his anti-social behaviours, but his teacher and teacher-aide continued reinforcing his and his classmates' appropriate behaviours.

Even though Mark's aversive behaviours were an issue prior to school entry, there was no specific mention of these behaviours at the transition to school meeting or on the written report. No-one addressed the anti-social behaviours Mark engaged in on his school entry (for example, saying "no" to everything, hitting and pushing others, making loud noises). Duty teachers occasionally instructed peers to reprimand Mark if he engaged in anti-social behaviours at lunchtime. However, when they did so, Mark usually ignored the instruction(s), which contributed to his alienation from his peers.

Jonathan's teacher expressed concern about his lack of attention and antisocial behaviours but strongly resisted the strategies suggested by the early intervention staff and his parents. For example, when Jonathan's mother said that she had seen other children also move about on the mat and suggested that the teacher might talk to the children in general about not moving, the teacher replied,

"I don't feel the class need a pep talk on it. I'm not prepared to do that."

Jacob's teacher and the duty teachers kept a close watch on Jacob in the playground where he tended to engage in anti-social behaviours. He was interrupted engaging in anti-social behaviours on several occasions. Children's reports of his bullying were followed-up by reprimands and redirection of his play. In the classroom, he was rewarded frequently for appropriate behaviour. Consequently, he engaged in more appropriate behaviour at school.

Ignoring focal children's inappropriate social behaviours and not helping them acquire more appropriate behaviours negatively affected their inclusion. Mark and Jonathan's anti-social behaviours did not improve as a result of their teachers ignoring and reinforcing only their appropriate behaviours. Clearly, their aversive behaviours were being maintained by factors other than the teacher's praise. Ian's teacher largely prevented the kind of aversive behaviours he engaged in at kindergarten and immediately on school entry by changing the antecedents and simultaneously providing an inclusive social context. Ian's social behaviour improved rapidly. Jacob's antisocial behaviour also improved as a result of the more vigilant monitoring that took place in the school setting.

#### ***(vi) Dealing with differences children notice***

Children can only become valued community members when they do not have to hide their differences, but when they are valued as an integral part of their being (Ballard & MacDonald, 1998; Kunc, 1992). When peers openly comment or ask questions concerning differences they notice about the child with DS or others teachers are faced with the issue of whether to and if so, how to respond.

How the different teachers responded, was very consistent with their views on inclusion. The teachers and teacher-aides who viewed inclusion as assimilation generally ignored the children's comments while the teachers who valued diversity used these opportunities to establish shared meanings about the issues raised. In Mark and Jonathan's schools, children's comments concerning any differences they noticed about the child with DS or in the teacher's behaviour in relation to him were consistently ignored. During printing when Jonathan's teacher models the task for Jonathan in his printing book and Hugh asks her, "Why are you doing his (Jonathan's) ones (letters for printing)?" she ignores the question.

By denying or ignoring differences, children may receive the implicit message that differences are negative attributes to be hidden and not openly acknowledged. The children with DS also receive the message that they are not valued as they are. Consistent ignoring by teachers means that disability knowledge/issues are marginalised (not valued) and opportunities are lost for enhancing understandings about diversity. However, the children did not ignore differences. Their (albeit limited) understandings remained and were reflected in their behaviour (exclusion of the child). In the schools where the teachers ignored apparent differences, peers saw these differences as all-encompassing.

“No. I don’t. (play with Jonathan) There’s something wrong with him, that’s why he’s Down Syndrome...He talks in a funny kind of way.” (Gerard)

When teachers ignored public comments about differences the children discussed their observations about the child privately. This occurred in Richard, Mark and Jonathan’s classrooms. In absence of adult input, they also added interpretations, such as in the following example:

A peer calls out “Look at Jonathan” (who is not sitting up straight). Another peer responds “Well, he’s just a handicapped because my sister said.” (implying that he is not one of us).

Adults seldom heard children discuss Mark. When they did, such as when he was teased by a group of boys in the playground, the teacher-aide responded by taking him away (by the hand), thus offering him protection instead of dealing with the perpetrators or facilitating some shared activity.

Richard’s school placed a strong emphasis on kindness and Christian charity. The class had been prepared prior to Richard’s arrival about his disability and their being mindful of him. The children absorbed the most consistent and dominant messages that Richard needed help and that they should act kindly towards him. This resulted in his peers focusing on his potential incompetence and engendered a helping ethos, even in situations where Richard did not require or desire it. As Richard had been presented to the class as ‘disabled,’ his classmates tended to focus on these attributes

but were given no explanations by the teacher and opportunities to experience Richard as a 'real' person capable of being a friend or valued classmate.

In Ian's school, the teacher or teacher-aide deliberately and openly discussed the children's comments about his differences or unconventional behaviours and interpreted them in a positive and valuing manner. When Ian moved some little chairs from the desks over to his mother and little sister and a child called out to the teacher,

"Look what Ian's doing." She responded calmly and positively by saying, "Yes, Ian's Mum can now sit on a chair."

By the teacher and teacher-aide interpreting any unconventional behaviour and talking with the children about any differences they noticed, they developed shared meanings that facilitated the children's relationships with Ian. Later, the children interpreted Ian's intentions themselves, ignoring irrelevant unconventional behaviours, even accepting some of his behaviours as new norms for the class. Interestingly, the children were never observed talking privately about Ian in the way Mark and Jonathan were talked about. This suggests that the children accepted Ian's differences as 'ordinary' and there was no need for secrecy when talking about them. They felt sufficiently safe and comfortable to discuss openly any issues with their teacher and teacher-aide as they occurred throughout the day. The children at Mark and Jonathan's school usually discussed such issues amongst themselves in private.

***(vii) Focus when issues arise: the individual or context?***

When significant issues arose concerning the focal children with DS (for instance, running away, disruptive behaviour, curriculum), individual teachers responded by locating the source of the issue in one of two ways. Either the issue was viewed as belonging to the individual child due to his (and sometimes also his family's) limitations or it was viewed as a school or curricular concern. Where teachers located the source of these issues affected what they did about them, which in turn affected the child's inclusion. Their responses also provided insight into how they perceived the child's status and right to an inclusive education.

Mark's special and regular class teachers focussed on Mark's deficits when any issues arose. For example, when they thought Mark was uninvolved or lacking in purpose during developmental, they provided him with an individual teacher-aide to promote his participation in the activities. No attention was focused on how the existing programme and school culture might be altered to become more inclusive. Similarly with Richard, the focus was on meeting his 'special needs' generally within the regular curriculum. However, the adaptations made for Richard were not considered for any other child in the class. For example, an ergonomically correct footstool was placed underneath Richard's desk, while no attention was focused on ergonomically correct seating generally. The teacher-aide delivered most of Richard's formal curriculum, while his classmates experienced the delivery of the curriculum in both large and small groups of children with the class teacher.

Jonathan's teacher attributed any issues arising to his limitations or the fact that he had "difficult parents" with "unrealistic expectations." She discouraged Jonathan's mother from letting Jonathan go to an evening school concert and suggested his mother come in during reading activities each day to keep Jonathan on-task. Similarly, when Riccardo who did not speak English arrived at school, ran away and refused to engage in classroom activities, the teacher reported,

"I'll ring his mother and see if she can spend some time in the classroom."

Jonathan's teacher (and principal) did not believe schools should have to modify their practices in any significant way.

An issue which arose in both Ian and Jonathan's schools was the possibility of these children leaving the school grounds, both of which bordered onto busy main roads. How the two schools dealt with this issue highlighted their different philosophies. When this issue was raised prior to Ian's entry, Ian's teacher and principal acknowledged it as one for the school to address. At the suggestion of a self-locking device on the front gate, Ian's teacher and principal immediately saw its value in terms of the wider school context. Not only would such a device provide enhanced safety for Ian, but all its new entrants whose playground was situated there as well as



visiting preschoolers. In contrast, Jonathan's teacher and principal did not believe such action was warranted and insisted on the status quo.

"First it was Jonathan, now Riccardo (running away) ... I noticed that at early intervention, the gate was locked and everything was fenced. They don't realise that it's just not like that at school." (teacher, field notes)

Ian's teacher and teacher-aide were the only teachers who reorganised the context, activities, procedures and groups in such a way both from the outset and in situ to benefit the full range of diversity in the class. For example, when Ian showed marked distress at going to new environments - (library, next-door classroom, hall), instead of excluding Ian or ignoring his response, the teacher broke the tasks down into manageable steps and eased him (and other children unsure about these settings) in gently. The first step involved her taking the whole class on a brief visit to look at these places and talk about them. A few days later, while Ian and a group of classmates were playing around the hall at lunchtime and she was on duty, she invited these children to enter the hall and watch a group of children doing gymnastics there. In this way, Ian's 'differences' did not exclude him, lessen his status or undermine his unconditional right to participation. Issues were regularly examined in terms of their curricular practices, the agreed-upon philosophy guiding those practices, and the belief concerning Ian's unconditional right to experience a quality education. As part of their focus on the context as opposed to individual deficits, Ian's teacher and teacher-aide responded positively to peers who included one another appropriately, and interrupted inappropriate responding not only during free-choice times, but also during the more formalised aspects of the programme. For example, during a group story, Ian constantly tried to initiate contact with Philip by touching and calling him. Philip remained focused on the story, to which the teacher replied,

"Thank you Philip for not letting Ian distract you...."

Both Ian and Philip learned that story time was not the appropriate context for enacting the role as friend. By the teacher-aide focusing on Philip's appropriate behaviour, peers also learned where to focus their attention.

Overall, where teachers located the source of difficulties (deficit or curricular practices) determined the child's inclusion. Where an apparent deficit was seen to be the result of school practices, there was more authentic inclusion. Where children or families were seen as deficient, the children's experience was exclusion from the kinds of relationships conducive to facilitative inclusion.

***(viii) Positioning of child: insider/outsider***

When the teacher encouraged other children to discipline the child with DS, they positioned him as an outsider. For example, Richard's teacher encouraged his classmates to act as mini-disciplinarians or teachers. She regularly gave her class specific instructions regarding their role with Richard.

She asks Rachel and Richard to read a book together, which they start doing. The teacher then asks Rachel to "Put his (Richard's) fingers on the words." On another occasion, when the teacher was called away, she instructed the class to "Make sure Richard doesn't go outside."

Another way, some of the children with DS were cast into the role of 'outsiders' was by audible comments teachers, aides or older children made about "looking after" them. Such comments were often accompanied by the kind of care-giving typically used for much younger children, such as hand holding or picking them up.

Teacher-aide 1 to Teacher-aide 2, "I'm going to take William back over (to class) now. Do you want me to take Mark?" ... Teacher-aide to Mark, "Actually, I'm going to take William over to the classroom now.... I'll come back soon (for you)." The teacher-aide returns for Mark, then says to him in front of others still having lunch, "Let's go back to the classroom...." She takes Mark back by the hand. Children from the integrated room next door are also moving in the same direction. They walk past Mark and the teacher-aide, ignoring them and chattering animatedly amongst themselves.

Jonathan's teacher required all the children to fit into a standard set of norms, without provision for developmental differences. This contributed to the children focusing on Jonathan's deficits in the light of that standard. A consequence of a standard set of norms being applied without provision for differences was the teacher and teacher-

aide positioning Jonathan as an outsider. This is highlighted in the following incident.

Jonathan is sitting in the middle of the mat fiddling and disrupting children near him. The teacher-aide asks the teacher, "Shall I sit behind him (Jonathan)?"

The teacher approves and the teacher-aide sits amidst the children on the mat behind Jonathan. The teacher-aide's behaviour of sitting behind Jonathan conveys his lower status, and her publicly commenting to the teacher on his behaviour helped reinforce his outsider (object) status. In her interview, the teacher-aide described Jonathan as "one of the naughty ones" thereby providing another example of her positioning of Jonathan as an outsider. Positioning Jonathan as an outsider (deviant) was not an inevitable consequence from his impairment as is evident in the following example concerning Ian, but a function of the way disability was construed in this particular school setting. Had prior attention been focussed on Jonathan's seating (away from distractions) with simplification of the key (abstract) concepts in the story, Jonathan is unlikely to have engaged in being positioned and promoted as a lower status member or outsider.

From these examples, it can be seen that how teachers positioned the child with DS provided his classmates with a framework for how to relate to him. Where teachers perceived and engaged with the child as someone needing charity or looking after, the children either engaged in such interactions (Richard) or essentially ignored him (Mark). Positioning the child as a typically developing child (Jonathan's teacher) without any dialogue concerning his classmates' perceptions, resulted in his peers evaluating him as themselves and finding him lacking, deviant or 'odd.' The result was their overt exclusion of him, without the compassion or tolerance evident in Mark (sometimes) and Richard's schools. Active positioning of Ian as an integral member by dealing with issues arising, arranging the context to promote Ian's competencies, continually developing shared meanings, emphasising all children's wholeness and different competencies, interrupting disrespectful behaviours and promoting same status relationships in the face of Ian's more immature behaviour provided the children in his class with a different framework to the other three children from which to interpret their experiences and consequently, to include Ian.

### 5.3.3: Summary: Relationship between Existing Practices and Inclusion of Child with DS

Ian was the only child who experienced all levels of inclusion within days after school entry. His school had no historical structures (segregated classes), beliefs (for example, that children with impairments need teachers trained in special education) and practices (for example, how teacher-aides should be used) concerning children with impairments which interfered with Ian's inclusion. Diversity was expected at this school, regardless of Ian's presence. The school had in place a number of existing practices that were accommodating the diverse range of new entrants and they readily adapted these to accommodate Ian. For example, the new entrant teacher already attended to children's social relationships as part of her role in facilitating their entry. Ian's entry renewed her commitment and provided the impetus to extend this practice. Since no disability-related structures, beliefs and practices were present, the school created its own, extending systems already in place in conjunction with Ian's parents and their support group (the early intervention team) who both subscribed to the social construction of disability and were knowledgeable about translating this philosophy into practice. Once aims and goals for Ian were established by Ian's family and school, any extraneous help offered by visiting professionals who did not adhere to the same philosophy was respectfully declined.

Mark and Jonathan's schools had long histories of segregating children with impairments and established belief systems about disability which focused on all-encompassing student limitations. Solutions centred on remedying the child's deficits. Both schools already had a 'pool of experts' available from trained teacher-aides and teachers who had completed certificates in special needs at the College of Education, itinerant mainstream support teachers based at special schools, and psychologists. Despite Jonathan's full-time enrolment into a regular classroom setting, from which his parents expected Jonathan to be included as a valued member into all aspects of the formal and informal curriculum, the school engaged in practices which focused on his differences ('not like us') which served to segregate him. When issues arose, such as Jonathan's 'disruptive behaviour' during reading activities, classroom practices were never examined. The focus was always on Jonathan's limitations for which the school continued to seek additional teacher and/or teacher-aide hours. This approach was also evident in Mark's school when issues arose

during his ‘inclusion’ into the integrated classes. In both schools, where there was little structure in place catering for diversity, safety and well-being, for example, inadequate playground supervision, any suggestions made by the focal child’s parents or support team concerning the focal child either failed or were resisted.

While Richard’s school had no history of including children with impairments and staff were eager to learn, the school’s existing culture (based on Christian caring) and the way staff perceived disability (as a personal tragedy/difference) worked against providing an authentically inclusive context. The majority culture did not change, but additional practices and procedures were willingly adopted on account of Richard. However, the overall outcome was similar to that for the other two schools because both teachers and peers cast Richard into the role of ‘other’ and he did not experience facilitative inclusion.

## **SECTION 3**

### **5.4: Indirect Practices**

Sections 1 and 2 highlighted existing school practices, modifications of those practices and implementation of new practices, which impact directly on the child. In this third and final section, practices and issues that have an indirect impact on the quality of inclusive education experienced in the classroom are examined.

#### **5.4.1: Parent-School Relationship**

Theoretically, the developmental potential of children is enhanced when they participate in multiple settings when the following conditions are present (Bronfenbrenner, 1979): i) there is goal consensus between the settings and the role demands are compatible, ii) the linkages are supportive, iii) the communication is reciprocal, and iv) most of the communication occurs in face-to face encounters. Thus a genuine parent-school partnership where there is mutual sharing of knowledge, power and decision-making is related to optimal outcomes for all, including maximisation of the child’s development and a source of strength for parents, teachers and children (Norris & Closs, 1999; Slevin, 1995).

All parents in the study desired an open and close relationship with their children's teachers concerning their children's education. They were all sensitive to the fact that their children's teachers were extremely busy which made them wary of requesting too much of the teacher's time. All teachers too, expressed the desire to have an open and close relationship with each child's parents. However, the expectations and parameters of that relationship varied considerably with each school having its own understandings about appropriate parent involvement. Most schools saw parents as "para-educators." They expected parents to agree to the school's decision-making, follow-up any school-related activities at home and offer to parent-help or support any special activities at school (for example, concert, bus trip). All the parents were willing to fulfil the latter two roles, but they also sought an equal partnership with the school concerning their children's education. Three types of parent-school partnerships emerged from the data.

#### ***(i) Limited Knowledge Base***

In two of the schools (Richard and Mark's), there was regular formal and informal communication between the parents, teachers and other professionals and the relationship was open and friendly. The parents supported their children's teachers and although Mark's parents were disappointed in Mark's achievements, they did not attribute this to the school but to Mark's own limitations. Both schools supported and admired the families in their task of raising their children with DS amongst others and for following-up any schoolwork sent home.

At the same time, however, the parent-teacher relationship was hampered by limited knowledge about the nature of inclusive practices. Neither parents, school personnel nor other professionals involved considered the school-related practices were relevant to the children's inclusion.

#### ***(ii) True Partnership***

Ian's family experienced the same mutually supportive relationship with the school. In addition, Ian's parents had an extensive knowledge of inclusion, the impact of DS on learning, and the social construction model of disability. When issues arose, they consulted with their support group (early intervention team). The school valued the parent's knowledge and were able to relate to the parents' aspirations for their son.

The philosophy of disability the parents held had elements in common with the school's practice of catering for individual differences. With both parties having a similar knowledge and understanding of inclusion and the practices needed to achieve that vision, they were able to agree on goals, the values underlying them and the means to realise them. The principal said his role was to

“make them (Ian's parents) understand that their concerns won't be considered grizzles even if they come one day after the other.”

Ian's mother was aware of this openness.

“They've (school) always said to me if there's something worrying me, not to leave it 'til that meeting, just to say....so that's really neat.”

At the transition to school meetings, all parental concerns raised were listened to, discussed and resolved with mutually acceptable solutions. Both parties were also respectful of one another's positions and the different bodies of knowledge each contributed.

Ian's school took the proactive step of setting up a monthly meeting solely for the purpose of establishing shared meanings between parents and school. Ian's teacher reported after Ian's first official day of school,

We (Susan) and I talk a little each day, but don't get into big things, but I hope that we will have a regular meeting with Susan at least every month, so that we can share things at least on an informal basis and we can discuss these bigger issues and see if our expectations are coming together. I expect they will....

### ***(iii) No partnership despite the rhetoric***

In contrast, Jonathan's parents had great difficulty establishing any dialogue with his teacher. Despite the teacher stating at the first transition meeting that she intended having an open relationship with the parents, this never happened. Jonathan's mother was a frequent parent-helper and made several attempts at establishing times to discuss issues related to Jonathan's inclusion, but the teacher discouraged these initiatives. On one such occasion Jonathan's mother tried initiating a meeting to discuss issues arising from the first IEP meeting (about 6 weeks after school entry). She describes the barriers she encountered.

I asked the teacher for a review of the IEP (meeting) and she felt that there was nothing to talk about. I raised it again on Wednesday and she tried to put me off the idea altogether and gave me all the reasons for not having a meeting. When I persevered and the teacher made an appointment, she said that it would have to be with the principal there as 'I would be too vulnerable on my own'. I consider myself a quiet and shy person and wonder why I am so threatening to the teacher when all I want to do is discuss Jonathan and his progress. She told me that she was a very well qualified teacher. I find this amazing when she can't even meet with Ken (husband) and myself to talk about Jonathan without a support person.

The teacher felt that Jonathan's parent's demands were unrealistic and undermined her position as a teacher.

It's a little bit sad (relationship with Jonathan's parents) in a way, 'cos you like to have a good relationship with the parents. I don't feel as if I'm being trusted to do the job. After that IEP, I didn't know where they (Jonathan's parents) were coming from. The IEP was all set and done. It was functional and down to earth, but there was a lot of dissatisfaction from Jonathan's parents. So Wendy (itinerant mainstream support teacher) and I and Jonathan's parents sat down and talked about it ... This wee meeting I felt went quite good (for parents' agenda, see Appendix K), then they came back with this letter (see Appendix L – summary of what parents had hoped to convey) and the demands were incredible - who should teach Jonathan and who shouldn't, how often IEP meetings should be held ... It made me quite cross. I've had very little positive feedback from them and we've tried so hard ... Mum's not happy with the way Suzanne works, but Suzanne has done her certificate in special needs. The training that she's had and the parents' demands don't go hand in hand.

Jonathan's parents and the staff at Jonathan's school were operating on two different sets of beliefs. Jonathan's parents wanted Jonathan to have access to all aspects of the curriculum and barriers removed, which interfered with this goal, be they attitudes, practices, lack of knowledge or other factors. They wanted the school to address contextual issues such as the poor role models in Jonathan's reading group, but the school felt such issues were "not the parent's business." The school felt that Suzanne (teacher-aide) was extra well qualified to teach Jonathan, but Jonathan's parents felt that her ways of breaking tasks into small steps which differed from what the class were doing, alienated Jonathan from his peers, and made the task meaningless for him. Jonathan's school operated on the premise that the staff held the professional expertise and had the best interests of the child at heart (for example, Suzanne's teacher-aide training was seen as of greater value than the parents'



knowledge) and judged the parent's desires for Jonathan as "demands." The school also viewed the role of 'good' parents as supporting them, irrespective of their actual level of satisfaction.

"We've (teachers) had very little positive feedback from them (parents)."

Jonathan's parents believed that because they were familiar with their son and issues related to his disability, they also had expertise to offer and therefore wanted a shared partnership.

"...there wasn't any openness to discuss anything (at meeting review the IEP). Our ideas (parents) were completely rejected and then she (teacher) just moved onto the next thing." (mother)

Jonathan's parents had no intention of wanting to take over the process as Jonathan's mother explains,

Wendy (itinerant teacher) and Dianne (teacher) didn't come up with anything (when discussing printing) and I suggested something....I wasn't trying to tell them how to do it. I was just trying to get the ball rolling...You know, no way would I tell her how to teach in there.

Observational data during the meeting showed that every issue Jonathan's mother raised for discussion was ignored, dismissed or rejected. Despite the mother's ongoing concerns, the meeting concluded by the itinerant teacher saying to the class teacher,

"I'll see you on Monday and check with you (about the completed IEP)", and the classroom teacher stating to the itinerant teacher, "I think those targets are great!"

This ignored not only Jonathan's mother concerns, but excluded her from the process in which they could be addressed.

Unlike Ian's school who respected Ian's family and their support service (early intervention team), Jonathan's parents were upset about the way his teacher rejected their support group (the same early intervention team used by Ian's family).

To me, Christine, the teacher hasn't respected the ... (name of early intervention programme). You know, I actually feel quite hurt about the way she has treated the early intervention team...to me she's actually being really quite rude to very professional people. (mother)

The differences between the parents and school's understandings of inclusion were never resolved. The school and their support service (itinerant mainstream support teacher) did not see the school's understanding of inclusion as any concern of Jonathan's parents. The school believed there was only one "common-sense" perspective on disability. It was an individual issue stemming from the child's limitations, with the child's (and family's) role to assimilate into the school's existing culture. Thus, despite frequent attempts by Jonathan's parents at establishing a genuine partnership, the structurally more powerful institution (school) was either unable or unwilling to consider their views, which resulted not only in Jonathan's but also his parent's exclusion.

It would seem that this school had particular expectations of parents in that they should be co-operative, appreciative and trusting of the experts. The parents who were operating on different discourses of disability (social construction) and parent involvement (genuine partnership) inevitably raised different issues and offered different 'solutions' to issues posed by Jonathan's inclusion. Their focus was on pedagogical solutions related to the curriculum, which the teacher might employ to include all children, whereas the school's divisive focus centred only on Jonathan and how to cope with his limitations. One of the parents' attempts to resolve some of their concerns was by instigating a meeting following the first IEP (six weeks after school entry), which they followed-up by presenting the teacher and itinerant teacher with a written summary concerning their understandings and expectations (see Appendix L). However, the school interpreted the initiation of this meeting and presentation of written document as the parents making "unrealistic demands."

#### 5.4.2: Monitoring Inclusive School Practices

Ian's school staff members were the only ones who regularly reflected on how their informal and formal practices matched up with their (and Ian's parents') shared philosophy on inclusion. The teacher and teacher-aide instigated two classroom planning meetings per week, in which time was set aside specifically to discuss Ian's

learning and inclusion-related issues. Ian's parents were always welcome to attend these meetings. Opening-up meetings traditionally reserved for school personnel indicated a valuing of the parent's input and a sharing of power. Informally, the teacher and teacher-aide constantly monitored their practices throughout the day with one another often casually mentioning how they had reflected on particular incidents and would do something differently another time. They also tried different approaches to find one, which worked most effectively. For instance, initially Ian was rough with some of the equipment, which resulted in his breaking crayons or (block) buildings. After using a range of phrases to encourage him to handle the materials more carefully, the teacher-aide discovered that using the concept 'gentle' was most effective, "He's learnt to respond to the word 'gentle.' That seems to really make some meaning for him.... 'Gentle' is the word that seems to work."

Since Jonathan's teacher did not believe in adapting procedures to accommodate Jonathan, there were no procedures for her to monitor. It is not known to what extent Mark's special class teacher monitored his inclusion. There was no direct evidence of any monitoring. Richard's teacher did monitor his inclusion according to her interpretation of the term, but because of the underlying philosophy of the school, the fundamental issues that would have facilitated inclusion, had not been recognised and adopted. However, the deeper structures pervading the school reflected exclusion and these were left intact, which meant that there was a preponderance of unequal status relationships between Richard and his peers. Consequently, Richard's status as a much-loved but deviant member was perpetuated.

#### 5.4.3: Teacher Support

Teachers generally work most effectively when they feel supported by one another, their colleagues, the principal, parents of their pupils and other professionals (Biklen, 1992). In terms of inclusive outcomes, the data indicated that support in itself was insufficient if the support was not based on a sound philosophy of inclusion and an adequate knowledge base of related issues (for instance, how DS impacts on learning, how children become included members). Three of the teachers felt affirmed and supported by all concerned. However, in only one case study (Ian's) was the knowledge base concerning inclusion supported by current research on learning and inclusion. This required a vision of what inclusion consisted of in practice and the

kinds of processes facilitative of achieving that vision. Professionals who offered 'support' that did not match the key players' inclusive philosophy or lacked a sound knowledge base were not utilised. In Richard and Mark's situations, the teachers reported feeling very supported by all those involved in the transition, but there were conflicts in the philosophies espoused by the different individuals, which went unnoticed and affected outcomes. In Jonathan's case, the teacher felt supported by the principal and itinerant support teacher who all adhered to the deficit model of disability, but not by Jonathan's parents and their support group, the early intervention team who supported the social construction model. The teacher and school's professional discourse was accepted without question, thus dismissing the parent's voice and alienating them. The outcome for Jonathan was ongoing exclusion and for the teacher, greater negativity towards the inclusion of children with DS. Teacher support is clearly a necessary condition to ensure facilitative inclusion, but only if it has a sound knowledge base adhered to by all significant participants.

#### 5.4.4: Changes in Context (Beyond Classroom Practices)

One child (Neil), who possessed competent social skills in both preschool and school contexts was excluded from the boy's peer group on his entry to school. His exclusion seemed to be caused by a tight existing group structure which aside from personal agendas, was promoted by various classroom practices. These included children's self-selection of partners or groups, no specification of norms to promote the inclusion of new members and no processes to facilitate group membership (for instance, activities in which children experienced proximity and frequency of contact with a diverse range of classmates). These processes encouraged the promotion of solidified groups, which made it difficult for new children to enter. Neil only experienced both levels 1 and 2 inclusion when there was a re-organisation of classes. The boys responsible for Neil's exclusion had moved on and a neighbourhood peer had entered Neil's classroom. Neil and this boy developed a friendship. In this situation, a change in circumstances, independent of the teacher's day-to-day classroom practices, resulted in his experiencing facilitative inclusion. It seems unlikely that this could occur as readily for a child with DS such as Jonathan as there were additional factors contributing to his exclusion. Not only did the dominant boy's group but also most of his classmates constructed him as incompetent/deviant, providing him with few alternatives for being included in any group. Furthermore,

classroom practices focused on his deviancy failed to facilitate any shared understandings and school-wide practices involved a deeply embedded culture of exclusion. Rejecting the pervasive deviant role and overcoming the exclusion permeating through the entire system would be difficult for any child, but even more difficult for a child with DS with less developed social, language and cognitive skills.

## **5.5: Summary of Chapter Five**

### 5.5.1: Factors associated with Inclusion

The contextual factors most clearly associated with inclusive outcomes involved congruent inclusive practices at all three levels of the immediately observable school system (microsystem, mesosystem and exosystem). This involved a principal who implemented an inclusive philosophy (developed in conjunction with the child's parents and teacher) and had a vision of how this philosophy would translate into school practices. Since the philosophy was mutually agreed-upon and based on sound educational practices and a social model of disability, he could simultaneously support the child, his parents, teachers and the entire school community. Since this particular school already had practices in place at both classroom and school level, which catered for the heterogeneity in its student roll, additional practices on account of the child with DS were incorporated into this existing infra-structure rather than instigated in isolation exclusively for the child. Enrolment of the child with DS provided a renewed commitment to social justice and ensured that children's differences were both valued and catered for.

A trained teacher was sought for the position of teacher-aide and she taught together with the teacher, each being responsible for particular groups of children. This allowed more adult attention for a greater number of children as well as allowing Ian to be included as an equal-status class member. At the classroom level, the teacher and teacher-aide focussed on expanding existing practices to enhance the child's inclusion. They used strategies such as seating arrangements, selecting daily tasks and activities to facilitate proximity and frequency of contact and instigating and enforcing specific norms for inclusion. The teachers addressed specific factors relating to the child, which impacted on his interactions with peers, notably addressing his high levels of anti-social behaviours exhibited at kindergarten and on

school entry. Discussion about perceived differences was used to facilitate children's understandings, enabling them to respond in an appropriate and valuing manner. The teachers' foci was always on practice, peer behaviour and the curriculum, not the child's perceived deficits. The teacher never gave any child permission to act in the role of authority or teacher over any other, thus positioning all children as 'insiders.'

School practices were regularly reviewed in terms of their inclusive philosophy and the parents were closely involved in all matters. The teacher set up regular meetings in order to share and discuss information with the family. Both teacher and teacher-aide familiarised themselves with, and used the insights obtained from, literature on DS. Both parents and teachers shared a common, informed knowledge-base, and ideas on how this might translate into practice. The parents and teachers followed the social model of disability, and consulted professionals (the early intervention team), who subscribed to the same philosophy when needing additional expertise.

#### Factors insufficient for inclusion

Liking the child, enthusiasm about the child's presence and working hard to acquire information, change existing practices and attending courses on 'special needs' was not necessarily related to inclusion for the child. What was critical was the actual philosophy guiding those practices. This had to be supported by a sound knowledge base and be congruent at all levels of the school system. Thus, it was insufficient for school staff, parents and professionals to all share a philosophy, have amicable relationships and be satisfied with child outcomes on their own as not all philosophies and accompanying practices led to inclusive outcomes for the child and his classmates. While changing the school culture to embrace differences was critical to inclusion, the changes needed to be based on an inclusive philosophy. Changing the school culture to accommodate an individual as opposed to making changes to accommodate a wider range of learners resulted in peers focusing on the tragedy, charity, deficit (stereotypical) aspects of disability instead of seeing the child as a same status member with similarities and differences like any another.

### 5.5.2: Factors Related to Exclusion

The application of practices based on the traditional view of disability (the individual is seen as needing ‘fixing’ through special treatments) to regular settings was overwhelmingly related to exclusion. These practices were most strong in the two schools that had long associations with special education in the form of on-site units. The other school (Richard’s) that had no such associations but also based its practices on this model did change some contextual factors, but lacked awareness of the different philosophies underlying these practices. All professional and practical support is clearly not equal in terms of child outcomes, nor is the assumption that more one-to-one adult attention for the child leads to more desirable child outcomes. The philosophy underpinning how both professional and practical help is utilised was the more critical factor in determining inclusive outcomes. Additional practices instigated specifically for individuals led to exclusion if they were not incorporated within existing practices.

A school philosophy based on uniformity, conformity and assimilating the child (and family) into the existing school culture conflicts with the philosophy underlying inclusion and actually promoted exclusion. In these schools, peers evaluated the child like themselves and found him lacking, which resulted in their hostile exclusion or passively ignoring him. In the other school where the child’s differences were highlighted, the child was still excluded as a same-status member but he was included kindly as an object or pet who always needed help. In an inclusive paradigm the valuing of diversity is the norm.

In the school where there was little infrastructure to guarantee even the most basic levels of safety, it was clearly inadequate for addressing the more specific issues concerning the child’s parents, such as facilitating qualitative shifts in children’s social inclusion. In this case, the parents’ concerns were perceived by the school as demands possibly because they involved the instigation of new strategies as opposed to minor alterations to existing ones.

While school cultures that were not inclusive affected children both with and without DS, the implications were greater for the children with DS. This was because the typically developing child could use subsequent opportunities to become included

(for example, the re-organisation of classes) and he could more easily adopt other roles to enable him to be successful. The child with DS did not have this luxury. The processes and abilities needed to successfully engage in valued roles (for example, competent student, friend) were considerably less advanced in the child with DS, which in an exclusive context forced the child to disengage from school tasks and take on the role of clown.

Overall, where existing practices were already inclusive and the principal and his staff had a vision of what an inclusive school might look like, adaptations for the focal child were incorporated with minimal difficulty. Issues related to the mesosystem and exosystem, such as the selection of which professionals and practitioners to select to support the process, the quality of parent-school relationships and the monitoring of the inclusion process were all unproblematic when the key personnel involved shared the same inclusive philosophy.

Inclusion and Academic Skills: While inclusion is commonly conceptualised as pertaining mainly to social development, in terms of the purposes of schooling and equity, an exclusive focus on social outcomes is clearly insufficient. An important purpose of schools involves enhancing children's acquisition of culturally-valued skills, tools and knowledge (Edwards & Mercer, 1987) and providing equity for children whose access to such learning may be restricted (Ministry of Education, 1993). The purpose of the following three chapters is to show how the identified social processes impacted on the academic processes and outcomes for each of the focal children with DS. The three curriculum areas were selected because they were common across all classrooms and because the potential skills and understandings are conducive to living and working in an inclusive society.

The chapters all follow a similar format, which differs from the previous three chapters. Each begins with a summary of the child's competencies on school entry and where available a summary of competencies approximately one term later. Whereas in the previous section, contextual issues were placed in a separate chapter, in the subsequent section, contextual issues are included in the latter part of each chapter.



## **CHAPTER 6: PARTICIPATION AND ADVANCES IN ORAL LANGUAGE (NEWS-TIME)**

News-time, also referred to as “sharing time” typically occurred when the entire class sat together either randomly or in a circle with one child chosen to address the group at a time. She/he would typically describe an experience or show an object to the class. The teacher usually structured the experience. She chose who spoke first, how long she/he spoke and whether peers were to interact with the child, when and for how long, although sometimes the management of this process was assigned to parent-helpers or the children themselves.

News time was included in the analysis because: a) it formed an important part of the new entrant curriculum, usually occurring daily, b) it provided an opportunity for the children to be in control and initiate their own narratives on topics of interest to them, (in more teacher-controlled subjects, a particular way of responding was expected or the children were less involved as they did not share the same level of interest), c) observations of news-time provided information about how the children were included by the feedback they received from their classmates, and d) news-time involved important skills of listening, attending, responding, active participation, and has an important influence on literacy development (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1993).

### Jacob and Neil’s Participation

During their first pre-entry visits, the two typically developing boys displayed the following skills during news-time. When invited to speak, they would either state that they had no news or verbalise at least one complete sentence (for example, “I’m having a new cousin.” - Jacob). At times, they brought an object to show the class and talk about it. Depending on the norms for the class, they answered the teacher’s or other children’s questions before allowing the next child to speak. Both boys possessed skills that enabled them to profit from the experience when the situation did not go their way. For example, when Jacob was unable to hear a peer’s news, he said to the teacher, “I can’t even hear.”

Neil, in particular was able to create opportunities for himself if the situation did not provide them. When the teacher thanked him for his news, but he had more to say, he said, “Do you know what else...?” He was also able to prolong his opportunities by creating suspense. For example, starting with a statement whilst holding his object behind his back and saying to the group, “It starts with tr, tr, tr...”

On one occasion, when he did not have his concrete item with him, he asked the parent-helper taking his group if he could go to his desk and get his news (item). Neil took as much control as possible in order to deliver his news in the way he intended it.

Both these boys were able to correct discontinuities that occurred during interactions. When a peer made a comment about Neil’s item, Neil replied, “No! It’s not the right one for that.”

Similarly, when Jacob was talking about his birthday presents, a peer called out to the teacher, “Did he (Jacob) tell you he got a remote controlled car?” When the teacher said, “No.” Jacob replied, “I did. Remember?...”

They also possessed skills such as taking turns, listening to other children’s news, engaging in the appropriate rituals (for example passing on the block to signify the next speaker) and asking one’s partner, “Have you got any news?” There were times however, when both boys did not engage in the prescribed manner by either playing with their items or looking about the room, but neither was ever disruptive to others.

The children with DS did not demonstrate any of these skills, and were much more dependent on a facilitative context to enable them to participate in increasingly advanced ways. The aim of this section is to describe the outcomes of news-time for each child and illustrate how different contexts contributed to those outcomes.

### Inclusion of data

The number and length (in minutes) of each episode the three children with DS engaged in at news-time and the way news-time was undertaken are listed in Table 10.

An episode of news-time was defined as the teacher overtly announcing that it was news-time or there was an implicit assumption that it was news-time. In Ian and Jacob’s school, the children were expected to sit on the mat after the 9 o’clock bell ready with their items for news. News-time concluded when the teacher asked the children to put away any items shown for news or announced the next activity.

Table 10. Formats, Number and Mean Length (Minutes) of News-time Episodes Participated in by Each Child with DS.

Type of News Episodes	Ian		Mark		Jonathan	
	N	Length	N	Length	N	Length
Teacher-led (whole class)	8	11.75	5	14.0	2	17.0
Teacher or parent-led small group	0		2	6.5	1	13.0
Peer-led small group	1	unknown	0		0	
Dyad with a peer	0		0		4	6.0
Total	9	11.75	7	20.5	7	36.0

6.1: Children’s Learning

For children to maximise the social and academic benefits from sharing and listening to one another’s items of news and for the group to run smoothly as a suitable context for this to happen, all participants needed to acquire a range of appropriate skills. While the format of news-time differed at times in and between the three classrooms (see Table 10), some elements were noted as central to its success, regardless of its format. These elements are listed in Table 11. How the three boys with DS and their

peers participated in this activity approximately a term after school entry are also shown.

Table 11. Skills Involved in News-Time Competencies Acquired by Children with DS and their Classmates Term after School Entry

Skills Acquired	Ian	Mark	Jonathan
<b>Social Participation Behaviours</b>			
Knowing where/how to sit	Yes	No. Sits in middle of circle. Moves around	Yes
Spontaneously takes part on cue as opposed to being cued in by teacher	Yes	No	No
Puts item away at end on cue	Yes	N/A: Few bring items	No
Aware of what to do during news. Puts hand up when teacher asks who has news	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Inclusion Behaviours</b>			
When news is done in pairs or small groups, peers spontaneously include child with DS	Yes	No	No
Peers include child with DS in general conversation before news starts	N/A: No-one does. Children sit down with their items and wait	No	N/A: News is done after other subjects. No opportunity
When peer is paired with child with DS, peer maintains contact with child	N/A	N/A	No

Table 11 (continued)

Attends to person speaking and not touching own or others' items	Yes	N/A: Children hardly ever bring items	Touches others' items while others are talking
<b>Academic Behaviours</b>			
Uses more complex language	Yes*	No. Still points and answers yes/no questions	Yes**

Note: 'Yes' means that the child showed evidence of the skill

\* Compare Ian's first few news-times where he showed an item and used no language despite teacher attempts at eliciting language from him with his participation 4 months later, when he spontaneously showed two McDonalds toys and said, "I got that" and another recent occasion when he said, "No news."

\*\*Jonathan also used no language during his first experiences at news-time, but at the end of the term, he stated an approximation of "Boys brigade, marching." as he attempted to explain to the group that he had watched his brother march in the Boy's Brigade parade, the previous night

N/A: Not applicable

6.2: Case Studies

6.2.1: Ian

As can be seen in Table 11, Ian acquired the routine skills required, such as knowing where and how to sit, what to focus on, when to and when not to talk and touch items, where and when to put one's own item away. By the end of the first term he was using more complex language when sharing his news. While the social participation structures of the task are not necessarily essential skills on their own (for example, touching someone else's item may actually enhance one's understanding of the concept as may talking out of turn), they do contribute towards the smooth running of the activity and ensuring that everyone gets a fair opportunity to participate. Children with DS in particular are more likely to be able to focus on the salient aspects of the task (someone else's news) and be in a better position to learn from it, if their attention is not elsewhere.

When Ian started school, he played with his item himself, did not actually show it to the group and put his head down when asked a question by the teacher. By the end of the first term, he showed the items to the group and used a short sentence describing what he was doing. He learned the procedural routines of where and when to sit, when and when not to touch items and when to talk. Despite never having the procedures explicitly explained at the beginning of Ian's schooling when the teacher asked the group, "Who has got news?", he raised his hand on those days he had news. On days he did not have news, his teacher reported him saying, "No news today." Ian's peers learnt to include Ian. During his first few experiences at news, peers seemed wary of Ian's unconventional behaviour (he drove his toy car over the girl next to him). By his fourth day, individual children were beginning to show Ian their items either spontaneously or when he asked. For example,

Keri shows her watch to the group. Ian then asks Keri if he can see it again by asking, "Keri?" and stroking her arm. She shows him before covering it up again with her cardigan sleeve.

Individual children also let Ian (as well as their other classmates) hold or play with their items briefly before putting them away and peers were always observed readily creating a space for Ian in the circle when he was finding somewhere to sit.

#### 6.2.2: Mark

Although not evident in Table 11, Mark did make some progress. When he began school, he refused to participate in news-time. At the end of the first term, he pointed to something and answered some 'yes'/'no' questions posed by the teacher. However, he was capable of using more complex language (one-to-three word utterances) in other contexts both at home and at school, which suggests that there were contextual issues during news-time, which interfered with Mark using and extending his more advanced forms of expressive language. Mark did not appear to develop an understanding of what he was required to do at news-time. He did not put his hand up when the teacher asked who had news to share, faced the wrong way, frequently moved about and never participated spontaneously. Mark's peers had also not learned how to include Mark as an equal participant. They did not know him because the only time he was in the class was at news-time and the subsequent

developmental session, which involved the entire junior section of the school. Mark's peers always ignored him prior to news-time when virtually all the children were engaged in animated talk amongst themselves. He was never selected by any of the groups when the children were asked to form small groups. At the same time, Mark's behaviour during news and on similar occasions when he was with a large group consisted of erratic anti-social behaviours such as hitting, taking possessions and pulling children's clothes. No teacher intervention occurred to change this pattern of interaction.

### 6.2.3: Jonathan

Jonathan knew how and where to sit during news-time and he used more advanced forms of language when the group was taken by an adult. However, other procedural or social participation skills were not firmly established. He touched and was likely to damage other children's items at the end of the first term, although he never engaged in such behaviour at the time of his entry to school. He did not put away his item(s) where and when requested at the end of the sessions, but it is doubtful whether he always understood where to place the items. He only spontaneously participated when he was cued in.

Jonathan's classmates never learnt how to include him as a partner. This was evident when news was undertaken in pairs. Jonathan was never chosen as a partner. When the teacher paired him with someone, no interaction occurred because his partner asked to be paired with someone else. On at least one occasion, Jonathan's partner continued talking throughout the entire time, without giving him an opportunity to present his news. Another time, peers continued talking even when Jonathan was clearly not attending. While partners were supposed to swap over the talker/listener role half way through, Jonathan's partners never did and used the entire time to talk. Also, Jonathan and his partner sat quietly opposite each other saying nothing and on another occasion, his partner turned around to join another pair, leaving Jonathan without a partner. When Jonathan attempted to join another pair, they rejected him by telling him to go with his own partner. He spent the time quietly sitting alone on the mat amongst the pairs until the next activity. When this situation occurred with

the typically developing boys, they would interject and ensure they got their turns. However, Jonathan had not yet developed such skills.

**6.3: Classroom Contexts**

There seemed to be a number of contextual factors that facilitated Ian and his peers’ active participation, and others which interfered with Mark, Jonathan and their peers’ development during news-time. The following three tables (Tables 12, 13, 14) summarise the salient features experienced by each child with DS.



### 6.3.1: Ian

Table 12. Classroom Contexts Experienced by Ian during News-Time

---

#### **1) Social interaction:**

- i) Peers are as willing to sit next to Ian as any other child
- ii) Ian is included as a valued classmate and friend
- iii) Involved in spontaneous peer interactions around items of interest

#### **2) Organisation of group process:**

- i) Teacher attends to seating and ensures all children have their items ready before starting
- ii) Teacher helps children include one another
- iii) Teacher interprets Ian's unconventional behaviour to classmates
- iv) Social, moral and procedural norms are consistently enforced
- v) Teacher consistently cues Ian (particularly at the beginning) to focus of activity

#### **3) Instructional techniques:**

- i) Orderly, predictable environment: no events occurring simultaneously.
  - ii) Monitoring whether children are listening to others
  - iii) News-time made meaningful and interesting by the teacher:
  - iv) encouraging children to bring concrete items from home
  - v) mediating between the speaker and class who may not share the same understanding
  - vi) linking material presented with children's experiences at home or other settings
  - i) Encourages brief spontaneous comments about another child's news
  - ii) Combines oracy and literacy after norms have been established: Group prepares a news-sheet
- 

Because attention was paid to the social, organisational, and instructional issues, Ian experienced a setting in which he felt sufficiently safe to contribute. He learnt how to participate appropriately in a group situation, use more complex language, attend to and contribute to other presentations. The way news-time was undertaken was predictable and organised, yet it allowed for each child's contribution and

spontaneous comments. The lower numbers when Ian started school (16), which the principal ensured remained static for the first two months possibly enabled news-time to be conducted in this format. When numbers increased and the children were familiar with the format, the teacher divided the group into two smaller groups. She still monitored what took place in the groups, although a child led each group. To enhance Ian's communication and understandings, the teacher almost always used the information and/or items provided directly by Ian's parents, or indirectly through the home-school notebook. She also drew on knowledge of him and his setting acquired through an earlier home-visit

Ian's teacher used strategies to promote inclusion as well as to facilitate each child's contribution. For instance, she interpreted any unconventional behaviour in a positive light (for example, on Ian's first day, when he wandered off towards the end of the news session, the teacher stated to the class, "He did very well sitting on the mat for this long when he's not used to it at all."

Another strategy involved the children introducing themselves to the group prior to news in order to get to know one another's names. The teacher always conducted the group in a circle so that everyone could see one another and thus perceive body language as well as the verbal content. While short spontaneous comments were accepted, the teacher ensured that no-one interrupted one another's news-time. When Edward answered a question the teacher had directed at Ian, the teacher stated, "No, Edward, it's Ian's turn." Similarly, when Ian interrupted by putting out his item during Laura's news, the teacher told him to put his item back and she focused on enabling Laura to finish off her news. A final strategy the teacher used involved asking a child to put her item in front of her when Ian stretched to see so that she and Ian both could view it properly.

### 6.3.2: Mark

Mark's experiences during news-time are summarised in Table 13.

Table 13. Classroom Contexts Experienced by Mark during News-Time

---

#### **1) Social interaction**

- i) Not included: Mark is in the class for only brief periods each day
- ii) Children avoid sitting next to Mark or ignore him. He excludes himself by hitting.

#### **2) Organisation of group process**

- i) Teacher or aide never intervenes in peer interactions
- ii) Mark is not introduced to the group on his first (or subsequent) day(s)
- iii) Mark does not always get a turn, nor do other visiting children with impairments
- iv) Mark's or other children's unconventional behaviours are never explained
- v) News-time expectations are never explained to Mark or others
- iii) Minimal attention to seating and organisation before commencing
- iv) Large class with insufficient space resulted in considerable noise and movement
- v) Several activities occurred simultaneously providing distractions from the main activity
- ix) Procedures never made explicit, e.g. how to sit, who to attend to, when and when not to speak.
- x) No inclusive norms evident: norms assumed all pupils could fulfil news-time requirements
- xi) Teacher is unfamiliar with him, his interests, communication skills and abilities  
(Mark is only in the class for half an hour a day)

#### **3) Instructional issues:**

- i) Participation and quality of participation not monitored.
- ii) Cramped seating arrangement precluded observation of speaker's body language necessary for fully understanding the content.
- iii) Teacher does not enhance meaning of what takes place at news-time or the intent what the content children contribute.
- iv)

Table 13 (continued)

- 
- v) few children bring concrete items.
  - vi) home-school notebook not read by mainstream teacher.
  - vii) items for news-time from school bag or in special class never observed to go
  - viii) with Mark to mainstream class at news-time.
  - ix) no mediation of content to extend schema of Mark's or peers' contributions
  - x) Unlike in the other small groups, the teacher-aide elicits news from Mark instead of his peers.
  - xi) Teacher is unfamiliar with him, his interests, communication skills and abilities.
  - xii) Teacher only sees Mark for half an hour each day. She does not know him, so unable to facilitate his development, by drawing on his experiences and understanding his communication.
  - xiii) Teacher reports not being responsible for his learning.
- 

Mark's half-hour visits to the mainstream class provided insufficient opportunities for him to develop the relationships that were essential to the successful delivery of news. He and the other visitors were not seen as equal and integral classroom members. This was evident when the teacher took the roll at the beginning of each news-time and none of the 'visitors' (children from the special units) names were on the roll. She called out their names in the order she saw them on the mat after calling out her mainstream class first.

It is difficult to envisage how Mark's language could develop in a context where he, the mainstream teacher and her class were virtual strangers. As noted by Smith (1988), "Language is not encouraged when children are in an unequal power relationship" (p. 161). Since the mainstream teacher did not know Mark and did not utilise the information provided in his home-school notebook, she was in no position to help Mark develop any meaningful dialogue with his peers. Mark's presentations of news usually 'broke down' as the teacher and class were unfamiliar with Mark's immature speech, his items from home for news-time did not accompany him and

only his special class teacher and aides read the home-school notebook which explained the news items. On the day Mark came to school animatedly with a pad on which he had attempted to write his name, his mainstream teacher did not provide an opportunity for Mark to share his experience. She asked him about his weekend to which Mark briefly vocalised and then she moved on to the next child. Unlike the typically developing children who were able to repair this type of discontinuity (see Neil, p. 287), Mark did not possess the skills to tell the teacher that his news item was in the room next door (Silvern, 1988). When Mark responded with a brief vocalisation to the teacher's question, "Did you have a good weekend?" the teacher-aide (who had read Mark's notebook) told the mainstream teacher about Mark's printing and counting activities at home. The teacher did not follow this up. Instead she moved on to the next child who received an extensive opportunity to share her experiences. By the teacher ignoring Mark's contribution, his peers were not provided with a model as to how they might interact more effectively.

Mark's mainstream teacher reported being willing and enthusiastic about including the children with impairments in her class at news-time, but she did not see extending their development as part of her responsibility. She said, "They're not my responsibility." She viewed their presence at news-time as a time for learning social skills such as following instructions, turn-taking, listening, and for her class to become more accepting of children with impairments. Yet, there were no planned processes to facilitate these outcomes. For instance, Mark could not enhance his listening skills when so many of the children's news items contained concepts that he had either not acquired or were not explained in a meaningful way. Furthermore, news-time often had multiple extraneous activities occurring simultaneously. For instance, while a child was presenting news, children who used wheelchairs came in late from their special classes, a group of children worked on a weather chart, a reading tutor heard a child read, parents gave brief messages to the teacher and individual children talked to one another. Prior to the commencement of news-time, the teacher did not ensure that everyone was seated and comfortable. The circle was also too large for the space available. Throughout the session the children could not see or hear the speaker and started moving about and talking amongst themselves. Few children brought concrete items to illustrate their news, but when they did,

Mark was more attentive, suggesting that he needed more meaningful experiences to focus his behaviour. While he was not usually disruptive, Mark often faced the wrong way, fiddled with materials behind him, looked around or played with his handkerchief.

The teacher did not enable Mark to profit from news-time by facilitating his understanding of the content or helping his peers and him get to know one another in the process. When he did not respond to the invitation to give news, the teacher assumed that he had no news. No one ever suggested that he get his news item from out of his bag or use the information provided by his parents in the home-school notebook. The children were never encouraged to bring along interesting items to show and describe and there was also no link made between oracy and literacy such as writing up someone's news. The connection between spoken and written language was never made explicit to Mark.

#### 6.3.3: Jonathan

Jonathan's experience at news-time is presented in Table 14.

Table 14. Immediate Classroom Contexts Experienced by Jonathan during News-Time

---

**1) Social interaction**

- i) Not included: Never chosen as a partner.
- ii) Partners resist being paired with Jonathan (and others perceived as deviant)
- iii) Peers reject Jonathan's spontaneous comments, but accept similar ones from other classmates
- iv) Jonathan is spoken about as an "outsider"
- v) Unsure of peer invitation, does not assert himself, and is ignored

**2) Organisation of group process**

- i) Unaware of Jonathan's exclusion during news-time.
- ii) No instructions about what is expected during news-time
- iii) Teacher ensures all are seated and have a partner, but no monitoring of interactions
- iv) Some rules are specified but not at a level Jonathan comprehends
- v) Norms do not take into account what the possibilities are when one has a partner with limited expressive language

**3) Instructional issues**

- i) Participation and quality of participation not monitored
  - ii) Information and concrete objects from home rarely used to facilitate Jonathan's presentation
  - iii) Peers given no strategies how to include Jonathan or others with limited expressive language
  - iv) Link between oracy and literacy is made, but for abstract topics such as the day of the week, not utilising the concrete items children have presented. May not have meaning for Jonathan
- 

The inclusion experience was a negative one for Jonathan, and one which did not permit access to more advanced understandings of content or participation. Apart from one mutually reciprocal interaction when Jonathan asked his partner if he could hold her item, during the other news sessions which involved pairs, there were no, or only negative interactions.

A number of circumstances contributed to the lack of a successful news-time for Jonathan and the peers he was associated with. On his first day at school, he did not respond to what would have appeared to the majority as basic questions directed by the teacher. He also did not repeat the standard phrase to the next child, "Have you got any news, Peter?" As the teacher did not interpret this behaviour, it may well have left the children wondering about Jonathan as a potential partner or indeed as a valid member of the class. The teacher had set up situations in which the children were confronted with issues in their pairs that they had not yet learnt how to respond to. For example, they were sometimes assigned a partner with minimal expressive language (Jonathan or one of the other boys identified as having special needs) without any instructions, suggestions or modelling on how to undertake the task given these set of circumstances. The teacher did not monitor what took place between the partners and so could not facilitate more appropriate interaction. Furthermore, Jonathan was rejected and seen as an outsider at other times of the school day, which hardly made him a sought-after partner at news-time. Children's motivation for including him at news-time would therefore be reduced. There was also a lack of co-ordination between the school and home. His parents ensured Jonathan had interesting items for news-time in his desk and they wrote information about them or other experiences in his home-school notebook, However, the teacher never ensured that the items or information were used to facilitate Jonathan's participation at news-time.

Concepts and complexities in the instructions seemed beyond Jonathan's level of understanding, particularly at the beginning when Jonathan had never experienced news-time. One set of instructions on Jonathan's third day involved the following:

"Put your hand up if you've got something to share. If you haven't got news, then turn to someone who has got their hand up."

To be able to follow the instructions, Jonathan needed to recognise that "something to share" meant the same as having news. He needed to understand what having one's hand up meant, decide whether he had news or not, then move to a person with their hand up. News-time was never explained to Jonathan and his DS limited his understanding of abstract concepts and weighing up more than one issue at a time. It



is not difficult to understand why Jonathan did nothing in relation to this instruction. The constant changing of the news formats, the rules that went with each format, the language used to describe news may also have contributed to Jonathan's not acquiring a basic set of skills for engaging at news-time.

Both Mark and Jonathan's status as non-valued, excluded participants in other school contexts was illuminated during news-time when no-one advocated for their participation when they were excluded. In Mark's class, he and several others from his special class were (probably inadvertently) omitted from presenting their news. No mainstream child commented on their exclusion. In Jonathan's class, a similar incident occurred when Neil brought along a rubber stamp and pad to show. He offered a stamp to all in the group and all the children except Jonathan ensured that they received a stamp. No one had noticed that Jonathan had been pushed out of the group and it was only when his mother told Jonathan what he needed to do to get a stamp, that he got his.

#### **6.4: Summary of Chapter Six**

Successful news sessions meant that the children had opportunities to develop their language, learned the procedures, participated when required and were included without hesitation. Successful news sessions were associated with the following factors:

- The teacher used the same format for several weeks.
- The teacher modelled how to include a child in the table
- The teacher regularly interpreted children's unconventional behaviours in a favourable light
- The teacher established a class culture, which accommodated differences.
- The child experienced inclusion as a valued classroom participant
- The teacher used the material supplied by parents from the home-school notebook in an unobtrusive way in order to promote shared and enhanced understandings
- The teacher attended to the management of the activity, for example established rules about how and where to sit, acceptable noise level, ensured all could see the child speaking and her/his item

- The teacher monitored participation, ensuring children participated, did not opt out too often, were excluded and knew what to do when they encountered unfamiliar circumstances such as a peer with minimal expressive speech.
- The teacher made explicit the links between the spoken and written word
- The teacher gradually raised expectations for all children (on an individual basis) over time, for example, lack of necessity for always bringing a concrete item.

Gaining access to facilitative participation in news-time was strongly related to being a valued participant in other contexts and the extent to which the teacher engaged in practices conducive to all children's active participation. This involved attention to organisational as well as instructional issues and provision of a model of how to establish shared meanings with children who communicate in other ways. Whether these same factors or others were conducive to gains in another curriculum area (literacy) is addressed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 7: DEVELOPMENT OF LITERACY SKILLS

The aim of this chapter is to describe: 1) the development of reading and printing skills of the three boys with DS by comparing their skills at kindergarten and school entry with their skills 3-4 months later, 2) the classroom context in which reading and writing took place for each of the three boys, 3) factors outside the classroom that affected each child’s acquisition of literacy skills.

7.1: Description of Each Child’s Reading and Printing Skills

7.1.1: Ian

Table 15 outlines the oral reading abilities possessed by Ian on school entry and approximately four months later.

Table 15. Ian’s Oral Reading Skills on School Entry and Approximately Four Months Later

Skills on School Entry	Skills Evident 4 Months Later
Reads many emergent readers	Reads Red level 3 reading books
Sight vocabulary of 45 words generalised to different contexts e.g. books, magnetic letters on fridge, posters on wall	Acquired behaviours to enable him to benefit from group instruction e.g. staying with group and attending, reading at pace of group
Identifies most upper and lower case alphabet. letters	Identifies all letters and beginning to identify sounds of letters
Points to words as he reads	Reads many early reading books.
Self-corrects. e.g. Text – ‘A ship is big.’ Ian reads, ‘A boat is big’ immediately followed by ‘A ship is big.’ (pre-entry visit).	Oral reading skills more advanced than his classmates.

As can be seen in Table 15, Ian's reading abilities continued to develop while at school. His teacher reported,

"He (Ian) can read more than most children in this room. We can't always understand him as well. If you're sitting right with him with the book, you know what he's saying and know how well he can read it."

He had progressed from reading emergent readers of which he could read many on school entry past the Red series Levels 1 and 2, and with his reading group, he had started on Level 3 of the same series (Father Bear Went Fishing) during the follow-up observations. Furthermore, he had learned many of the skills necessary to benefit from learning to read in a group, such as sitting up straight and attending, reading at the pace of the group, following the text while others read aloud on cue and staying with the group. These behaviours which the teacher called 'surrounding behaviours' were not evident on school entry when Ian frequently touched others, their possessions or irrelevant materials, attempted leaving the group, read the book at his own pace and shut his book during instruction. He also learnt most of the book-related concepts used during instruction such as, "open the book on the very first page" and "point to the words." He knew the difference between a single letter and a word and concepts such as cover, the front and back (of the book) and how to turn the pages. His father commented at the end of the first term,

"I'm really impressed with it (Ian's reading). He gets a book every day (from school) and he can just about read every word in there. He can read the whole story to me...." (father)

Table 16 outlines the print-related abilities Ian had already acquired on school entry and those evident four months later.

Table 16. Ian’s Print-Related Skills on School Entry and Approximately Four Months Later

Skills on School Entry	Skills Evident 4 Months Later
Spontaneously prints first name, but may make errors	Spontaneously prints first and surname accurately and also other words e.g. Mum, Dad, car, in
Engages in pre-printing squiggles, symbols and letters from left to right	Generates simple sentences or captions on own to illustrate drawing e.g. ‘Mum and Dad.’
Traces over letters and words accurately	Traces accurately, but engages less often in this task as can generate own printing
Copies words from book or paper (not blackboard) – needs specific cueing to continue at printing time	Same, but needs fewer direct cues to continue
Spontaneously engages in meaningful printing in all settings	Spontaneously engages in more complex printing in all settings and more often
Reads own print-work	Reads own print-work
Low perseverance at doing printing in prescribed manner	Needs fewer cues to persevere at printing tasks, but often still resistant to completing task in prescribed manner
	Asks to have words spelled and attempts printing words himself
Planning – variable. May start printing too far at bottom of page or too far over to right, but can be accurate	Planning of printing is variable, sometimes accurate, sometimes not, unpredictable without cueing
Spacing between letters varies	Spacing between letters varies
Printing on same level varies from considerable accuracy to inaccuracy	Printing on same level varies from considerable accuracy to inaccuracy

Table 10 (continued)

Legibility of letters words and sentences varies  
from extremely clear to barely legible

Legibility varies from extremely clear to barely  
legible

From Table 16, it can be seen that Ian’s printing skills also progressed throughout his time at school. While he had acquired a number of competencies on school entry, he demonstrated many of these more consistently and extended his repertoire. For example, while Ian could print his first name (seven letters) independently and accurately before starting school, he still frequently made errors by leaving out letters, mixing up the order, writing it illegibly or a combination of these errors. However, after four months of schooling, he could not only print his first name consistently correctly, but also his surname and several other words such as ‘car’ ‘in’ ‘Dad’ and ‘Mum’ as well as write a brief caption or sentence independently.

Ian was also observed engaging in pre-printing symbols, letters and squiggles at home, at kindergarten and on school entry. However, a transformation from that into more purposeful and legible writing took place over time. For example, Ian would start captioning his drawings, writing out words he knew well such as the names of his family members and preferred objects such as ‘ball’ ‘book’ and ‘car.’ He also asked his parents how to spell certain other meaningful words such as ‘school,’ his teachers’ and classmates’ names and the name of his younger sibling. He was observed and reported to be engaging more and more in print tasks of his own accord.

However, other aspects of Ian’s printing, related to its planning showed no consistent improvement. Where to start, how to write a word so that it would fit on a line or a sentence on a page, the accurate spacing between words or letters and printing two or more words on different levels were still erratic.

7.1.2: Mark

Mark’s reading and printing development was very different from Ian’s. His level of skills on school entry was considerably less and no noticeable gains were evident four months after school entry. An overall summary of his reading development is presented in Table 17.

Table 17. Mark’s Oral Reading Skills on School Entry and Approximately Four Months Later

Skills on School Entry	Skills Evident 4 Months Later
Selects own name from other words	Same as on entry.
Spontaneously reads own name e.g. on own painting	Same as on entry
Participates in stories, fills in missing words	Same as on entry
Shows keen interest in books	Same as on entry

As can be seen in Table 17, there was no visible progress in Mark’s oral reading abilities during his time at school and this observation was also the view of his classroom teacher and parents. His teacher reported,

“Actually...academically, I haven’t taught him very much. He recognises his own name, but I suspect he was doing that before he even came here.”

Table 18 outlines Mark’s handwriting or printing abilities he had acquired on school entry and those evident four months later.

Table 18. Mark’s Print-Related Skills on School Entry and Approximately Four Months Later

Skills on School Entry	Skills Evident 4 Months Later
Prints first and last letters of his 4- letter name (3 letters)	Prints a ‘t.’ No longer prints other letters
No longer writes name (3 weeks after entry)	
Traces over first name accurately	Traces over lines and symbols
Copies and traces horizontal, vertical lines, circles and symbols on cue	Not observed
Prints horizontal, vertical lines and circles on cue	Not observed

Mark made no visible progress in printing throughout his time at school. While he entered school with a number of pre-requisite skills for learning to print (copying and tracing shapes, symbols and some letters, printing lines and circles on cue) and he was able to write his name with minimal help, none of these skills was regularly practised or extended at school. After three weeks at school, his mother stated, “He used to write his name, but he won’t do it now.” At the end of the term, she further voiced her concern, “I don’t know if he’s printing [at school].”

7.1.3: Jonathan

Table 19 outlines the oral reading abilities Jonathan demonstrated on school entry and after one term (three months) of schooling.



Table 19. Jonathan’s Oral Reading Skills on School Entry and Approximately Three Months Later

Skills on School Entry	Skills Evident three Months Later
Sight vocabulary of 20 words generalised to different contexts e.g. magnetic letters, word cards, in books, although does not demonstrate these abilities at school	Not observed during reading instruction
Participates in stories, fills in missing words. Shows interest in books through independent reading, attending to stories at kindergarten	Does not demonstrate oral reading skills at school.
Identifies alphabet letters in his real first name and some in his surname (approximately 8 letters)	Reads emergent readers at home accurately.  Sight vocabulary has increased to 30 words at home

Despite possessing a number of reading skills on school entry and participating in a regular class reading group, Jonathan’s reading abilities did not progress in the classroom context.

“His reading is still at the pre-reading stage. He’s still on emergent readers. I believe that he can at home... but it doesn’t come through in the group” (teacher).

Although he was not observed during reading instruction during the follow-up observations, his teacher and mother reported that few, if any gains had taken place in terms of reading or the necessary behavioural skills to benefit from learning to read in a group situation at school. He still wandered from the group, rarely had the book open on the right page, sat up straight, or pointed to individual words as requested.

Jonathan’s reading development did however, continue to progress in the home situation where he was reported to read and was observed reading several emergent readers and Red Level series reading books independently. His parents also reported an increase in the number of sight words he acquired. Jonathan’s printing skills are presented in Table 20.

Table 20. Jonathan’s Print-Related Skills on School Entry and Approximately Three Months Later

Skills on School Entry	Skills Evident 4 Months Later
Prints first name, but may make errors.	No change.
Verbalises actions when writing name	No verbalisation of actions while writing name
Engages in pre-printing squiggles, symbols and letters from left to right	No longer engages in pre-printing squiggles, etc.
Traces over letters and words, symbols, shapes, sloping lines accurately	No change
Copies some letters legibly e.g. ‘o’ ‘t’ ‘r’ ‘l’ ‘j’ ‘e’	Copying during printing is barely legible e.g. letter ‘c’
Needs specific cueing to continue at printing time	Continues tracing exercises without prompting; needs cueing to continue self-generated letters
Some recognition of own errors despite teacher praise for completion	Little error awareness
Planning – variable. May start printing in middle of line, bottom of page, too far right or omit letters when tracing, but can be accurate	No change

Table 20 (continued)

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Spacing of letters varies	No change
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Legibility of letters and words varies from very legible to barely legible	No change
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Formation of letters – awkward e.g. produces ‘r’ from bottom up	No change
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Procedures: Gets pencil out and puts away on cue

Attempts to do required tasks

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While one aspect of Jonathan’s printing improved over time (his spontaneous continuation at the tracing aspects of the printing task), no visible progress occurred in most aspects of his print skills and in fact, some of his competencies declined.

Unfortunately, the skills which Jonathan demonstrated on school entry but no longer displayed after four months of school attendance were ones necessary for competent printing. These included: 1) legible copying of letters and words as copying enhances independent printing more than tracing (Askov & Greff, 1975; Kirk, 1980), 2) error awareness necessary for making qualitative improvements and 3) self-monitoring skills necessary for more independent work.

Furthermore, instead of Jonathan’s print-work beginning to look more legible which was to be expected given what he could do at school entry (Smith & Elley, 1994; Tann, 1991), his self-generated work became more illegible. His teacher and teacher-aide confirmed this observation.

“Well, the storywriting, he’s actually gone backwards...I’ve actually been letting him draw a picture and write about it and it’s just a scribble....” (teacher-aide, final interview)

## **7.2: Classroom Instruction**

Section 7.2 examines the common instructional factors across the schools that were interpreted differently, resulting in different practices. They comprised : behavioural expectations, the teacher’s focus – group or individual, assessment of skills, nature of goals set by teachers, pace of tasks, implicit aspects of reading process, teachers’ awareness of child’s literacy needs and skills, printing/reading concepts and instructions, classroom opportunities for literacy development and literacy and inclusion.

### Behavioural Expectations

Ian’s teacher and teacher-aide placed considerable emphasis on how to sit and listen at the beginning of the term. Later in the year as the children (including Ian) internalised what to do, most of the attention was focused on the reading process.

Mark was not part of a group in his class. In Jonathan’s class, the children’s behaviours aspects were erratically attended to. End-of-term observations indicated that the majority of children in Jonathan’s group including Jonathan had still not acquired the attending and procedural skills necessary to enable them to profit from the instruction. The teacher was still focusing on the procedural aspects such as sitting up straight and pointing to the text as regularly as she did at the beginning. In part, this was because there was a continual stream of new entrants who were unfamiliar with the procedures and needed ongoing clarification of what was required. Attending to these procedural aspects for an entire term deflected attention away from the actual reading process.

### Teacher’s Focus: Group or individual?

In public situations, when Ian or others engaged in inappropriate behaviour, the teacher and teacher-aide seldom highlighted an individual’s deficits or unconventional behaviour, but instead emphasised the desired behaviour. For example, on an

occasion, when Ian was the only one not sitting appropriately with his reading group, the teacher-aide said, “Could I have everyone down here ready for reading?”

Ian responded by getting down from the teacher’s chair and joining his group. During Mark and Jonathan’s reading and writing instruction, the focus was usually on their individual behaviour, which was highlighted publicly. For example,

“Watching Jonathan” “No Jonathan, just looking at the cover.” “Jonathan, where’s your reading book? You go and get it.”

The teacher’s focus on Jonathan’s individual behaviour encouraged his classmates to see Jonathan as deviant, incompetent and ‘not like us.’ In contrast, Ian’s classmates learned behaviours important for reading and printing instruction.

### Assessment of Skills

Ian’s teacher and teacher-aide consulted extensively with Ian’s parents and early intervention staff to ascertain Ian’s reading and printing capabilities as accurately as possible. They observed him reading and printing in the familiar settings of his home and early intervention centre. When at the start of Ian’s schooling, he refused to engage in reading or printing, his teacher and teacher-aide never doubted his competencies as they had observed him in his more familiar settings. They assumed that contextual factors in the classroom were preventing him from displaying his skills at school. Their focus was on identifying and amending any environmental constraints (for example, by providing additional cues and supports) until his performance reflected his actual level of competencies.

There was a mismatch between Mark’s highest level of functioning and the content of instruction. Despite the early intervention report describing Mark’s competence in a number of areas, there was no instruction related to what he could do. For example, adults always printed his name on his art work, despite his being nearly independent at writing his own name on entering school. His teacher did not know how to assess Mark’s reading and writing abilities. She reported that she could not tell whether his responses indicated a lack of compliance or lack of skill.

There was also a mismatch between the content of instruction and Jonathan's current level of functioning. Jonathan's teacher did not observe his reading and printing skills at home, although she had observed Jonathan read isolated words and print his name at the early intervention clinic. She was dubious about the parental and early intervention reports concerning his literacy abilities and did not liaise with his family or previous professionals about her difficulty. She dismissed their assessments on the basis that "It (reading and writing) doesn't come through in the group situation." For Jonathan's teacher to consider his competencies as valid, she expected him to demonstrate them in the same way as his classmates who did not have DS. Unlike Ian's class, in which there were different ways competencies could be demonstrated with supports added and barriers removed to enable participation at one's highest level, in Jonathan's class children were expected to demonstrate specific competencies in specified ways.

Jonathan did lack some essential concepts that would facilitate his development of print-related skills, but when Jonathan's mother raised her concern about some of these as potential areas to target at the IEP meeting, the teacher dismissed her concern.

She (teacher) said, 'Most children don't know their alphabet. A lot of children there don't know letters.' And that was the end of that conversation....we couldn't get any further....if he (Jonathan) doesn't know the letters, how can he write down the sounds he hears (which is the expected task for story-writing)?

There were also other concepts Jonathan had not yet acquired which were not noticed by either teacher or parents, for instance, understanding the difference between a word and an alphabet letter and what constitutes a sentence.

#### Nature of goals set by teachers

The printing and reading programmes for Ian's class proceeded in a clear logical manner. In printing, the straight up and down letters were covered initially, there was tracing and then self-generation of the letter and eventually a small word or sentence containing multiple use of the letter. A different letter was taught each day and this was communicated to Ian's parents who purchased an identical exercise book to the one used at school for extra daily practice of the letter at home. In contrast, there was

no continuity in Mark's reading and printing programmes. For example, one day reading consisted of Mark filling in missing words, another day involved pasting words on top of a sentence underneath a picture and on another occasion, Mark was required to repeat each word after the teacher-aide. During printing, Mark was required to trace and copy over lines and symbols and not letters. Mark showed no interest in these tasks, unlike the interest he showed in printing his name, which he had printed at home and proudly brought to school on a jotter pad. No clear goals were established for the content and process of reading, printing and story-writing for Jonathan. The only specific goals established at the IEP meeting related to the mechanical aspects of reading and writing the tasks, such as

“Takes book out when told, keeps to the same page as others” (reading) and  
“Prints starting in the right place (printing).”

The printing tasks in the printing programme required a level of skill and perseverance, beyond Jonathan's entry behaviour. The printing programme did not follow the same logical order as it did in Ian's room. Instead, the more complex letters were introduced and interspersed with the simpler letters. Furthermore, unlike Ian's class, the amount and complexity of the printing tasks were not individualised. The newer children were expected to undertake the same tasks as those who had been at school for nearly a year.

### Pace of Tasks

Children with DS are known to be marginally slower in their movements and processing of information. This is likely to affect the speed of their printing and their oral reading. The teacher-aide ensured all children were ready before any oral reading took place by ensuring that they were seated and attending with the correct page open. She slowed down the oral reading of the group so that Ian could be comfortably included. To extend those in the group who could read at a faster pace and motivate them to read at the slightly slower pace, she encouraged them to put a lot of expression into their reading and modelled how they might do so.

Mark's reading occurred in a one-to-one situation so the pace of his reading and writing instruction was matched to him individually. The reading and printing instruction in Jonathan's class were too fast for Jonathan to sustain his participation.

The instructions precluded Jonathan's participation as they required rapid shifts in his attention (for example, from text to picture) and physical movements (finding certain pages in quick succession). His teacher seemed unaware that Jonathan was physically unable to keep up at the pace she specified and expected for the group. For example, she would say, "Let's read this altogether. We're going to read it together and keep up with each other." Jonathan was unable to produce the speech movements as fast as most of the others in the group.

### Implicit Aspects of Reading Process

As noted in Chapter 1, children with DS are less likely to make incidental connections unless explicitly specified. For example, they are less likely to spontaneously turn back to the beginning of the reading book if the end is reached and there are still children in the group whom the teacher has not yet heard read aloud. Ian's teacher and teacher-aide frequently highlighted such implicit expectations of tasks in ways that did not target Ian individually, for instance on one occasion, the teacher aide said, "Now, it's back to the beginning - this page everybody."

Such implicit aspects of reading and print-related tasks were seldom highlighted for Mark and they were erratically highlighted for Jonathan. When they were not highlighted both Mark and Jonathan consistently focused on incorrect or irrelevant aspects of the required tasks, such as looking at the wrong page or they opted out by fiddling or looking elsewhere.

### Teachers' Awareness of Child's Literacy Needs and Skills

At varying times, all three boys with DS engaged in unconventional behaviours, showed an interest in literacy in less conventional ways, and showed less complex understandings of print-concepts than their typically developing peers. Some of the teachers had greater expertise than others in interpreting the child's behaviour in a way that facilitated the child's literacy. Ian's teacher and teacher-aide were constantly on the alert for gaps in Ian's understandings or skills which would prevent him from fully participating in the print-tasks or successfully functioning in his group. At varying times, they targeted skills such as staying with the group, staying on the correct page,



taking turns to read as well as concepts such as the difference between the sounds and names of the alphabet letters.

Mark's teacher was unaware how to proceed with developing Mark's literacy skills and it did not appear a priority.

He (Mark) recognises his own name, but he was doing that before he even came here. I don't know whether he's recognising any of the other words...sometimes he does and sometimes he doesn't, then I wonder whether it's a mood or motivation thing – you can never be sure, but that's what we're doing.

Jonathan's teacher also seemed unaware how to facilitate his development.

Additionally, since many of the children in Jonathan's reading and printing groups also lacked the necessary behavioural skills, it was difficult for Jonathan to focus his attention on the salient aspect of the teacher's instructions. Instead, children talking or involved with other tasks often captivated his attention. By the end of the first term, he was able to read emergent reading books at home and he could independently print his name. However, there were basic concepts and skills that he had yet to acquire, which would have helped him profit more fully from reading instruction at school (for instance, knowing the difference between words and letters, where to point when reading, knowledge of more alphabet letters and how to sit and attend). While Jonathan took part in reading and print-related experiences with his peers, the skills and concepts needed to benefit from the instructional processes more fully were never made explicit as part of the classroom reading and printing programmes. Reading and writing instruction was undertaken in a way that exacerbated Jonathan's exclusion from his peers. It provided them with opportunities for casting Jonathan into the role of (incompetent) deviant.

### Printing/Reading concepts and instructions

As noted in the first chapter, it is important that any instructions and information given to children with DS are limited in number, specific in content, ideally have a visual component and presented as soon as possible prior to the task to avoid interference.

Ian's teacher and teacher-aide took these factors into account when implementing the classroom reading and printing programmes. Instructions relevant to printing were

presented when all the children were seated at their desks, had their materials ready and were about to engage in printing. Small aspects of each task were focused on one at a time to avoid overload. During reading instruction, the teacher-aide who took Ian's group used a whiteboard to highlight difficult or key words or to get children to write up certain words. Objects were used to illustrate key concepts (for example, a torch when there was a story about night time). Potentially unfamiliar concepts were explained to the entire group (for example, the difference between "he" and "she") and the teacher wrote such concepts in Ian's home-school notebook with suggestions on ways to reinforce their acquisition, so that his parents could facilitate their generalisation.

Jonathan's teacher presented most of the printing instructions while all the children were seated on the mat. By the time, Jonathan found his desk and located his printing book and pencil, the instructions were likely to be forgotten, particularly if difficulties arose in the interim such as his going to the wrong desk or not being able to find his pencil. Jonathan's teacher did not ascertain which concepts he was familiar with and which he had yet to acquire. During reading, the instructions given contained multiple amounts of information and concepts Jonathan had not yet acquired. Many instructions were given in rapid succession. Jonathan could not keep up with the pace. Jonathan's mother attributed some of his failure to progress in reading and writing to the overload of information and unfamiliar material contained in the instructions.

"I think at school (instructions at reading and printing) are still going miles too fast for him (third interview). ..."

Jonathan's teacher did not believe in making changes to the existing reading and writing programme on account of Jonathan's inclusion and did not do so. Jonathan's mother said,

I feel that he's learnt more reading with me doing some every night at home....I felt that he was making big progress with his reading, but that was because I was doing it. I think at school, things are still going miles too fast for him. I think things are being said and actions are being taken that are above his head, so I don't think he's actually learnt anything at school academically (final interview).

Jonathan's teacher preferred the teacher-aide managing Jonathan's printing and story-writing using 'special' techniques involving the tracing over dotted letters. Since the teacher was unfamiliar with these procedures she assumed that the teacher-aide held the necessary expertise which she lacked. Handing over Jonathan's printing instruction to the teacher-aide absolved the teacher from delivering a more inclusive curriculum.

#### Classroom opportunities for literacy development

Opportunities for spontaneous interest in reading and print-related activity were plentiful in Ian's room and many of his spontaneous interests were capitalised on and extended by his teachers. For example, Ian started making a card during developmental time after he saw a classmate make one for her mother. His teacher immediately supported him in his endeavour, particularly with his writing of the message. If the teacher or teacher-aide were not available when Ian showed spontaneous interest in literacy-related tasks, they often noted what he did and invited him to revisit the activity when one of them was available. Such opportunities were more limited in Jonathan and Mark's classrooms as their teachers led all the activities. Because there was no unstructured time, they were less able to notice and share the children's spontaneous interests in literacy tasks. Neither Mark or Jonathan's classrooms offered opportunities for spontaneous writing activities. There was no writing table or opportunities for self-initiated writing after required assigned tasks.

Mark had no opportunities for self-initiated printing, practice at or extension of his most advanced skills. Teachers assumed that he could not write and always wrote his name on his articles or art work. On the occasion he brought his jotter pad from home on which he had printed his name to show the class at news-time, none of his teachers or teacher-aides devoted much attention to it. He had arrived at school with a beaming face as he carried his pad and he, his mother and little sister talked about his emerging competence at writing his name as they walked towards his special classroom. His special class teacher was just leaving the classroom at this point and his mother reminded him about making sure he took the pad with him to the integrated class at

news-time. However, Mark did not remember and the teacher-aide (who was aware of the pad's existence as Mark's mother alerted her as he departed) did not ensure he had the pad with him. Neither she nor the regular class teacher read the information in Mark's home-school notebook until the end of the News session. He is likely to have learnt that while his family view literacy as a desirable goal for him, the school do not.

There were no informal opportunities for Jonathan to develop his printing skills, although there were opportunities for self-selecting reading materials (mostly books). While Jonathan's teacher held high expectations in terms of literacy for her class, these did not extend to Jonathan. She believed that his limited abilities precluded him from making many advances in this area.

Ian and Jonathan participated in reading and writing instruction virtually every day, whereas Mark who attended a special class for these subjects experienced considerably fewer opportunities. Reading was only observed on three occasions and formal printing instruction only once during the entire observation period. Although Jonathan spent an entire term in daily reading and writing instruction, there were no visible outcomes. The difference between Ian and Jonathan's opportunities was that Ian's consisted of meaningful experiences (to him), which were adapted to suit his (and other's) diverse capabilities within an authentically inclusive learning context. When Jonathan was seen to not cope, the teacher-aide intermittently used a separate printing programme consisting of his joining dotted alphabet letters, thus focussing on his individual 'deficits.'

### Literacy and Inclusion

For reading, Ian was placed in a group of eight specifically selected children who engaged in mature behaviour, related well to others and shared similar interests. His printing table consisted of most of the children in his reading group, some of whom became Ian's friends. During literacy activities, they provided support for Ian and one another, such as by joining the teacher-aide in clapping for Ian when he identified a word correctly, sharing the content of a book together in the library, reinforcing one another for doing their printing. Experiencing both levels 1 and 2 types of inclusion enhanced Ian's access to the literacy opportunities available. At the same time, Ian

and his friends' participation in the content of the literacy activities provided a rich context for maintaining and enhancing their social relationships.

Mark's reading and printing instruction took place individually, so he was never exposed to more competent readers and writers who modelled more advanced skills. Because he was not included in a group, he also missed out on the support and motivation a peer group such as Ian's offered.

Several of the children who excluded Jonathan in hostile ways in other contexts were also in his printing and reading groups. As in other contexts, they rejected Jonathan during literacy activities, such as by complaining when the teacher praised him, giving him authoritative instructions, teasing, ignoring and overtly excluding him socially and from the materials. Consequently, Jonathan did not experience a safe and supportive context in which he could learn to read and write.

### **7.3: Broader Issues Impacting on Classroom Literacy Experiences**

The child's experiences of reading and writing in the classroom were affected by: i) the parents, teachers and teacher-aides' expectations for the child's literacy skills, ii) the relationship the school and parents had been able to negotiate and iii) the extent to which more fundamental issues regarding the child's enrolment were resolved.

#### **7.3.1: Teacher and Parent Expectations**

Literacy development was highly valued by both Ian's parents and teachers. Ian actively participated in many print-related activities both at home and at school and he was strongly rewarded for engaging in and initiating such activities in both contexts.

The expectations Mark's teacher and teacher-aide had for him were low. There were few opportunities available for engaging in print-related tasks. Despite Mark's already having acquired some competencies and showing an interest in literacy skills, he was excluded from process writing in a regular class on the basis that "...it's not appropriate ....I couldn't see Mark being mainstreamed for process writing" (teacher).

Mark's parents valued literacy and wanted Mark to learn to read and write. They had already helped Mark acquire some literacy skills at home with the support of the early intervention programme. However, in absence of this support and with the teacher being unsure of whether Mark could learn to read and write or how to go about it, they gradually and reluctantly lowered their goals for Mark. After Mark had been at school for a term and a half with no visible progress evident in his reading and writing skills, Mark's mother reluctantly modified her view to that of his special class teacher. Mark's 'happiness' became the major focus whereas prior to and on his entry, his education (once he was settled and happy) was her main focus.

I think he's coming away, but not as fast as I would like him to, but that's just Mark, you know...if he doesn't read, he doesn't read. If he doesn't write, he doesn't write. It's just one of those things (looks disappointed). It's just Mark and you just have to accept him for what he is and what he can do....so yeah, that's all I'll be doing now. Because every time you ask him, 'Have you had a good day at school?', he says, 'Oh yes!' So at least he's enjoying it.

Jonathan's class teacher valued the acquisition of literacy skills for the majority of her class, but not necessarily for Jonathan. The class programme was full of structured literacy-based activities. However, Jonathan's teacher considered his abilities too limited and his inattentive behaviour precluded him from fully benefiting from these activities. Jonathan's parents valued literacy and had facilitated Jonathan's emergent literacy skills during his preschool years. They were aware of his increasing reading and writing abilities at home, but concerned about contextual factors hindering their development at school. Consequently, their concerns centred on enabling Jonathan to have greater access to the literacy activities at school and they tried to have these constraints removed.

### 7.3.2: Home-School Communication

Discussion concerning Ian's literacy development with shared goals and means to achieve those goals occurred regularly between Ian's parents and teachers. Ian's teacher and teacher-aide had considerable knowledge of reading development. Both had trained as reading recovery teachers. Ian's mother was highly knowledgeable about DS and how it impacted on learning. She knew how to access research and information concerning DS, its impact on learning and inclusion. She shared this

information with the school and both parents and school staff discussed ways of making use of it in a mutually acceptable inclusive, way.

As Mark's mother indicated earlier by her comment, "I don't know if he's printing", home and school did not share the same expectations and the processes by which they might be achieved to maximise Mark's literacy development. Since neither Mark's teacher or parents seemed to be informed as to what literacy skills could be reasonably achieved by children with DS, the positive relationship between the family and school did not benefit Mark in the way that it did Ian. Mark's parents did not know that his teacher was unsure about how to facilitate his development. Leaving the content of Mark's education up to his special class teacher resulted in his parents lowering their expectations of Mark.

Jonathan's parents' beliefs about inclusion and expectations for Jonathan differed from those of the school staff and the professional support people the school utilised. Despite many attempts at setting up meetings, their offering of support to the teacher and teacher-aide, their fundamental differences in perspectives about disability and inclusion hindered any meaningful communication about curriculum subjects such as reading and printing. There was no plan for Jonathan's development in reading and printing, no identification of specific goals, and reluctance on the teacher's part to discuss the specifics of Jonathan's literacy development with his parents. The teacher made several attempts at putting Jonathan's parents off instigating a meeting at which they wanted to address issues they felt were unsatisfactorily resolved at the IEP meeting.

The teacher-aide had a certificate in Special Needs Support and had learnt a particular way of teaching reading and printing which differed from what the rest of the class were doing. Jonathan's teacher was happy for her to go ahead using these programmes, but Jonathan's mother was not.

"Mum's not happy with the way the teacher-aide works, but she has done her certificate on special needs. The training that she's had and the parents' demands don't go hand in hand" (teacher).

Jonathan's parents wanted Jonathan included in the regular class printing programme. They felt that he could benefit from the existing instruction, provided some adjustments were made. The printing programme the teacher-aide wished to implement involved tracing over actual and/or dotted letters. Jonathan's parents were familiar with research indicating that self-generation of letters is superior to tracing for developing independent printing. They did not want him engaged in a separate programme, which would not only segregate him from his peers and potentially hinder his social inclusion, but also could also delay his acquisition of printing skills. The teacher perceived Jonathan's parents as "difficult" and felt that they (teacher and aide) were "not being trusted to do the job" (of teaching Jonathan). The parents felt that their observations of what Jonathan could do at home, their understandings of DS and how it affected learning were not taken seriously, which hindered any meaningful communication about Jonathan. In teaching Jonathan to read at home, Jonathan's mother was aware of some critical factors that needed to be present and she was concerned that the reading programme at school did not incorporate them.

I felt that he (Jonathan) was making big progress with his reading, but that was because I was doing it. I think at school, things are still going miles too fast for him. I think things are being said and actions are being taken that are above his head... (mother, final interview)

Despite many attempts, the parents were never able to develop any shared understandings concerning their views with the school.

"She's (teacher) not willing to look at the tasks and how they can be adapted for Jonathan..." (mother)

Clearly, effective home-school communication is essential for children's optimal development in literacy. However, on its own, it is insufficient. Good home-school relations also need to contain an enabling philosophy of disability and an informed knowledge base concerning reading, printing, learning and teaching. It is evident from Jonathan's case, that when parents possess some of the knowledge base and an enabling philosophy while the school firmly adheres to the deficit philosophy insisting that their own 'professional' (deficit) view is the only common-sense way of



viewing disability, child outcomes are compromised.

### 7.3.3: Relationship between Literacy and Parents' Experiences and Perceptions of Inclusion

Because the school was meeting the parents' expectations, valuing their contributions, and the parents and school shared a common, informed knowledge base, Ian's parents were able to devote their attention to facilitating the jointly-established literacy (and other) goals.

This was in marked contrast to Jonathan's parents whose energy was consumed with more fundamental issues such as attempting to create a mutually reciprocal working relationship with Jonathan's teacher about most aspects of his inclusion, including one another's philosophies of inclusion. Jonathan's parents were still trying to establish a process by which they could discuss Jonathan's inclusion in each of the curriculum areas such as reading and story-writing at the end of his first term of school.

Neither Mark's parents nor teachers queried Mark's progress in reading and writing (or any other aspects of Mark's schooling). Thus, while Mark's mother was disappointed in the outcomes for Mark, she considered the school were the "experts" and started attributing Mark's lack of progress to his limitations. In this way, she and the school were able to maintain their amicable relationship without the risk of being alienated.

The parents' satisfaction with literacy outcomes for their children was related to their satisfaction with more fundamental aspects of their children's schooling. Mark's parents were less aware than the others of his school experiences trusting the staff to make appropriate decisions concerning Mark's curriculum. On one level, they were sad and disappointed about his lack of progress in literacy, but they concluded that this must be an inevitable outcome of his disability.

## **7.4: Summary: Factors associated with Literacy Development**

### 7.4.1: Within-child Factors

#### ***(i) Child's literacy skills on entry***

The acquisition of print-related competencies prior to school entry was not necessarily beneficial in itself for the child to benefit from the school's reading and printing instruction. What was critical was that the teacher and/or teacher-aide accommodated their instruction to match the child's entry skills. Ian's teachers matched the instructional content to his existing skills, and subsequently extended them. Jonathan's teacher discounted his entry skills on the basis that he did not display them in the conventional manner at school. He made no further progress. Mark's school viewed literacy as an isolated set of skills to be mastered rather than a way of interacting and constructing meaning. This meant that spontaneous opportunities for enhancing his literacy skills were ignored in favour of specific skills instruction, which was not necessarily meaningful or interesting to Mark. At the end of the term, there was no enhancement of his existing level of skills in literacy. Thus arriving at school with competencies in literacy on its own, seems insufficient for ongoing development if there are barriers within the classroom context affecting the performance and subsequent development of those skills.

#### ***(ii) Child's behaviour and management***

Management of the group and the child's anti-social, unco-operative or unreliable responding behaviour was essential for gains in literacy to occur. Mark's teacher could never assess Mark's skills due to his unreliable responses, yet she never addressed this issue. It was important for teachers to teach the expectations for participation without focusing on an individual's deficits. Ian and Jonathan, who could read some of the emergent reading books fluently on school entry, were not aware that reading at school in a group required different skills from reading at home. When the necessary behavioural and reflection skills were not consistently developed on entry and additional new entrants were regularly added to the group, the group's behaviour remained unfocused and required the teacher's regular attention. Where such behaviours were consistently taught at the beginning and the participants in the group remained mostly stable, the children internalised the expectations and the

teacher was able to focus almost exclusively on the reading process. This was associated with positive outcomes for Ian.

#### 7.4.2: Classroom Factors

##### ***(i) Teachers' knowledge***

Enhanced literacy skills were associated with the teacher and teacher-aide sharing the same knowledge concerning inclusion, literacy assessment, the acquisition of literacy and the impact of DS on learning. Application of this knowledge required a willingness to change existing practices in a way that was inclusive of the child with DS. What was essential was an interpretation of literacy, which viewed all children as active learners (symbolic beings) who were motivated to become literate, but required active support to do so. The more commonly-held view that the child with DS lacks the necessary subskills and abilities and that reading and printing consist of a series of isolated subskills, which need to be mastered before proceeding to further levels was not associated with favourable outcomes.

##### ***(ii) Spontaneous opportunities***

Ian's classroom was the only one in which there were spontaneous opportunities for engaging in authentic print-related tasks. There was greater printing and reading development in this setting, than in the others, where no such opportunities were provided.

##### ***(iii) Belonging in a group***

Belonging as a valued member of the class and its pertinent subgroups is an essential prerequisite to optimal learning of content. Only one child (Ian) was socially included during unstructured times and several of his friends were also in his reading group and seated at his printing table. They provided each other with reinforcement for engaging in appropriate behaviour conducive to the acquisition of literacy and shared the same interest in books. Mark who attended a segregated class did not belong to any group and Jonathan who was in a regular reading and printing group did not experience belonging in either groups or with any other classroom members during unstructured times. In fact, many of the children in his reading group and printing table harassed him in the playground and during unstructured times. They did not encourage him

during literacy-based activities. In fact, they continued to harass him during these activities, particularly when the teacher was not looking. His peer culture did not provide a safe environment for him to acquire literary skills, which strongly suggests that mere placement in a reading and writing group is insufficient.

*(iv) Clarity of goals*

Success in literacy was related to the clear specification of goals related to the acquisition of literacy and these had to be in the child's zone of proximal development and shared with the child's parents. It was insufficient to engage in reading and writing activities and not know whether the child had achieved mastery or not as occurred in Mark's class, or not to specify any goals related to the content of literacy processes, as in Jonathan's IEP.

*(v) Meaningfulness of tasks*

Where tasks were meaningful to the child, there was more task engagement and greater outcomes. Ian's teacher regularly used visual stimuli to enhance understanding of concepts in stories. While Mark's teacher did so too, there were other factors mitigating against his acquiring more literacy skills such as the reading and printing instruction involving different processes on different occasions, Mark's failure to belong as a valued citizen and the teacher's uncertainty in assessing his abilities. Jonathan's teacher never enhanced understanding by using visual stimuli apart from showing the existing pictures in the storybook she was reading. Nor did she use other methods to facilitate the meanings of literary activities, apart from what she did for the class as a whole.

7.4.3: Other Issues Impacting on Acquisition of Literacy

*(i) Parent expectations*

All the parents expressed a desire for the schools to extend their children's literacy skills to the fullest extent possible. While Mark and Jonathan's parents did not specify precisely the kinds of long-term literacy outcomes they envisaged for their children, Ian's mother had very clear goals in mind. During her first interview, she stated:

I'd really like him to be able to read well, so that he can start reading novels and the newspaper. I'd really like him to get a subject in school cert or all 5 of them for that matter.

Rather than determining a specific level of literacy they hoped their children would achieve, Mark and Jonathan's parents expected the teachers to continue extending their children's existing level of literacy skills. Jonathan's father stated during his first interview, "He's starting to print and has a fair smattering of [sight] words. I expect that to continue." Mark's mother expressed concern during her last interview that Mark's printing skills had not advanced during his time at school. I'd like to see him get into writing. He used to be able to write his name." Regardless of whether or not the parents envisaged a particular outcome at the end of their children's schooling, all the parents desired enhanced literacy skills for their children, although Mark's mother reluctantly changed her expectations when Mark failed to progress. After liaising with the teacher who did not see literacy skills as a priority, she started querying whether or not reading and writing were attainable goals for Mark.

*(ii) Teacher expectations*

Ian's teacher and teacher-aide also expected Ian to acquire more advanced literacy skills and saw no reason why he should not continue to develop these further. They recognised his literary competencies, for instance his teacher noted during his first interview, "so many of his skills are so close to what the other children can do and in lots of areas such as reading, he actually is ahead of them." His teacher-aide was also aware of his competencies and saw her role as extending them as fully as possible. She stated,

The early intervention centre, the kindergarten, his parents have done wonders. He has really got a great foundation for learning. I'm a great believer in whenever a child has learnt anything, that we build on it...with any child. It's even more necessary with Ian.

Both his teacher and teacher-aide were aware that Ian sometimes demonstrated his literary abilities in less conventional ways, for instance, sometimes he sat on the teacher's chair and attempted to read a book to the class, reading some of the words correctly and babbling the unfamiliar words. Ian's teachers were also aware that optimal progress for Ian required modification of some existing practices, both from

the outset and during teaching. An example of this was the use of a small whiteboard during reading instruction on which the teacher-aide wrote up new or difficult words. She did this in view of the difficulty a child with DS is likely to have in remembering when relying on the use of auditory memory alone.

Mark's teacher and teacher-aides attempted to facilitate the development of Mark's printing and reading skills, but they did not consider this a priority. His teacher stated, "I see social skills as number one priority- getting on socially and then the academic will come."

Jonathan's teacher expected Jonathan to make progress in literacy skills through his participation in the existing programme. When he did not, she blamed his limitations and the fact that regular teachers lack specialised techniques and knowledge. She stated, "He seems to be making very limited progress to me. He's the sort of child who need lots of one-to-one. We're not trained to teach this type of child."

Jonathan's teacher-aide expected Jonathan to acquire literacy skills, but not through his participation in the general classroom programme. She considered his parents and the early intervention team's expectations for his literacy development were unrealistic. She commented:

I think that people's expectations of these children are far greater than what they can actually do. If they let them start with some little programmes and let us build on them to bring them up to the potential of their peers would be really good. You know, the printing you just saw (classroom printing)...well I've got this beaut printing programme which is in a lot easier steps...

While Jonathan's teacher and teacher-aide did expect Jonathan to continue acquiring some literacy skills, they believed that this could be achieved more successfully through the implementation of special programmes. His principal was also dubious of the kinds of advances children with DS, like Jonathan could make in the general classroom. He said that if Jonathan did not succeed in learning to read and write, then there would be other activities he could learn in the regular classroom.

He will develop um...academic skills, but they will be slow. You've got to be realistic about it...If he turns out to be one of these children who can read

comfortably and get something out of reading, that's a life skill. Um...if he turns out to be somebody who has got some problems that stop him from reading at all, there are other skills he can develop through contact in the regular classroom. (Jonathan's principal)

Thus, Jonathan's school staff did have some expectations for Jonathan to acquire literacy skills, but they involved his success being dependent on utilising existing classroom opportunities with minimal or no modifications or his participation in a special programme.

### ***iii) Home-school communication***

Open communication and willingness by both parents and teacher to accommodate and adapt existing procedures in the light of a shared philosophy resulted in the most satisfactory outcomes. Where parents acquiesced in or challenged the school's view (that literacy might not be a viable goal for the child), there were no visible outcomes for the child in terms of literacy skills. Thus, a genuine partnership informed by a sound knowledge base was essential.

### ***(iv) Parental/Teacher satisfaction with other aspects on inclusion***

Where the child's and family's needs have been satisfied at a lower level, for example, the child belongs, the parents are satisfied with the child's development and the methods used to achieve goals, communication with the school is reciprocal with an informed knowledge-base, literacy skills are more likely to occur. A satisfactory infrastructure thus needs to be in place before specific issues such as literacy can be adequately addressed.

Overall, development in literacy occurred as it did in news-time when the practices encompassed the range of diversity present.





## CHAPTER 8: MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

The aim of this final results chapter is to ascertain what kinds of processes the children with DS participated in during mathematics at school. Texts commonly refer to children with DS being able to achieve basic competencies in literacy, but their development of mathematical skills is often minimal (Buckley, 1985). This may be because the development of logical, creative, numerical and spatial thinking involved in mathematics involves considerable more abstraction than that required in literacy. In reading and printing, many of the words encountered by young children stand for one concrete object, while the concept of number is abstract, requiring the child to process and integrate multiple pieces of information simultaneously. For instance, successful counting involves; a) recognition of what is and what is not in the set, b) memorising the number words in correct sequence, c) assigning each object in the set one number and only one number, d) remembering which objects have and have not been counted, and e) knowing that the last number counted represents the total number of the set. While the complexities of mathematics are indeed greater than those posed by reading and printing, one cannot know whether the difficulties posed are intrinsic to the child or a function of an ineffective learning context. An exploration of the factors in each child's classroom and more distal contexts that contribute to the acquisition of mathematical development may help to identify the role the environment plays.

This chapter begins by comparing the mathematical competencies typically acquired by 3-4 years olds to those of the four boys with DS (Ian, Mark and Jonathan and Richard<sup>1</sup>) and the two typically developing boys (Jacob and Neil). This is followed by a description of the similarities and differences in the behaviours of the boys with DS during mathematics, their inclusion experiences during the mathematics curriculum and factors affecting those experiences, and the factors outside the classroom impinging on the development of their mathematical abilities. Finally, I summarise the similarities and differences in child behaviour, peer behaviour and classroom experiences at mathematics time.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard is only referred to intermittently throughout this chapter - when sufficient data are available.

The mathematical development of the children with DS on school entry was obtained from the early intervention reports and observations at the early intervention clinic, preschool and school. It was impossible to assess their progress during their time at school for two reasons: 1) Their performance was highly unstable on even basic skills such as counting 2-3 objects, and 2) the mathematics in their classrooms consisted of very different tasks that did not usually build on one another. For example, one day might involve patterning, while the next involved working with shapes. This meant that the children were observed engaging in the same tasks on only one or two occasions, which was insufficient to assess any stable changes in competence.

Mathematical data obtained

Table 21 indicates the number of episodes of mathematical activity observed data for each child and the settings in which it was observed.

Table 21. Number of Observations of Engagement in ‘Mathematics’ or Mathematics-Related Tasks, Mean Length of Time (Minutes), and Settings in Which They Took Place for Each of the Children with DS.

Setting	Ian		Mark		Jonathan		Richard	
	n	Length	n	Length	n	Length	n	Length
Kindergarten	11	<1	0		6	<1	0	
Early Intervention	1	10	1	10	1	10	0	
School	8	26	3	43*	6	18	1	35

\* It appears that Mark’s mathematical sessions were longer than the others, but this frequency is misleading. Mathematics at Mark’s school involved art activities, such as cutting, pasting and painting, which the teacher incorporated into the programme.

Since there are no specifically mathematics-focused activities in the preschool, for the purposes of this study, a mathematics-related episode at preschool was defined as any activity involving counting. In most instances, this involved the child counting independently or jointly with an adult, although there were a few instances where the

teacher counted emphatically as the child observed such as when the teacher counted the skittles the child had bowled over.

At the early intervention programme, mathematics was defined as any activity the staff classified as mathematics according to the reports they sent to each of the children's respective schools. This involved not only counting and number skills, but also classifying, seriating, patterning, matching and shape recognition skills. At school, a mathematics session began when the teacher announced its beginning. For example, "For mathematics today, we..." The child also had to be present and ready to participate (not for example, be completing the previous activity or be assigned to go elsewhere). Mathematics sessions concluded when all the equipment was put away and/or the teacher announced the next activity.

In order to compare the focal children's number skills in relation to the typical development of most 3 and 4 year old children (Baroody, 2000; Baroody & Price, 1983; Gelman & Gallistel, 1978; Young-Loveridge, 1987), their performance on number tasks during everyday classroom activities was noted from the running record data and compared. Data on the two typically developing boys were included to confirm that these are indeed skills mostly acquired by children on school entry. These particular number skills were considered important as they have been linked to competence in other areas requiring logical operations such as classification and seriation (Clements, 1984). They are shown in Table 22.

## 8.1: Skills Acquired

Table 22. Performance of the Children with DS on the Mathematical Skills Acquired by Typically Developing Preschool Children (Gelman & Gallistel, 1978).

Skills	Children with Down Syndrome				Typical Children	
	Ian	Mark	Jon	Richard	Jacob	Neil
Stable order principle	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Every item must be counted once and once only	Erratic	No	Erratic	No	Yes	Yes
Cardinality	Erratic	Unclear	Erratic	Erratic	Yes	Yes
Abstraction	Yes	Yes	Yes	Unclear	Yes	Yes
Order-irrelevance principle	*	*	*	*	Yes	Yes
Simple addition and subtraction	*	*	*	*	Yes	*
Pattern recognition (up to 4)	Erratic	Erratic	Erratic	No	Yes	Yes
Rote counting	Erratic to 20, stable to 5	Erratic (to 4)	Erratic	*	Yes	Yes
Knowledge of numerals	To 10	No	No	No	To 5 school To 10 preschool	3 & 4 only (not 1 or 2)
Matches numeral to set	Erratic	No	No	No	Yes	No

\* No data to indicate one way or another

### Stable Order Principle

Despite Ian, Mark and Jonathan intermittently omitting numbers when rote counting, their observed counting always proceeded in ascending order, unlike Richard who sometimes produced numbers in random order.

### Counting Objects

The counting abilities of all the children with DS were erratic. Usually items were missed or counted twice. For Ian, counting close objects such as the number of biscuits he had made was more accurate than counting the same number of objects further away (for example, the number of finger puppets the teacher displayed at the front of the mat) or items in a disordered array (for example, the number of children on the mat). When counting children on the mat, he was able to count up to 12 accurately, but he omitted counting himself, something his peers never did. Mark omitted counting the last two of the four cars he had lined up, but he did start at one and concluded that he had three, counting the second car twice. Jonathan's clapping to 5 or 10 with the class also indicated that 1:1 correspondence was not fully established as he either clapped too slowly or too quickly. When there were four objects to be counted, he counted, "1, 2, 3." However, on another occasion, he was bounced a ball and counted to himself, "1, 2, 3" each time he bounced the ball, thus indicating that he had some understanding of this principle.

### Cardinality

Ian had some notion of cardinality, but his performance was erratic. During an observation four months after school entry, he was involved in a game of number memory. At one point, Ian turned over a card with four eels, which the teacher-aide asked him to count. He counted the four eels accurately, but when he was asked, "So how many have you got (the cardinal number)?" he consistently replied "6". However, on another occasion, when he accurately counted the three dots on a card, he did reply, "3" consistently when asked for the cardinal number. Mark and Jonathan showed little sign of having grasped the cardinality principle. For example, when asked to count a set, which they did correctly, they gave another number when asked, "How many have you got?" Richard seemed unaware of how to respond to the question of cardinality. Each time he was asked, "How many (items) are there?"

he would label the item instead.

### Abstraction

All the children had some notion of the abstraction principle. This was evident by the way they spontaneously counted a variety of items or behaviours that interested them, such as pencils in a tin, children on the mat, names on a list, bounces of a ball, cars in a row.

### Order irrelevance

It was impossible to ascertain from the data whether any of the children with DS has acquired the order irrelevance principle as their counting always proceeded from left to right.

### Pattern recognition

Performance on pattern recognition was erratic like cardinality. Ian was more incorrect than correct in recognising patterns, but the type of error he made indicated that he had some idea of the numbers in the sets. His answers were always close to the actual number in the set. For example, for a set of four, his answers ranged from the numbers 2 to 6. Jonathan could recognise a set of “2” consistently. For example, he pointed out and said, “2 spider(s)” in a book, and he asked the teacher for another sticker after the teacher had given him one. He asked, “2”? (stickers).

### Rote counting

Ian’s rote counting was very consistent up to 5 and often stable up to 20. However, if going fast, he had a tendency to skip numbers and not correct himself unless the error was pointed out. Mark, Jonathan and Richard all left out the odd number even when counting to 4. Even if Ian’s rote counting was delayed and more erratic after number 5, it was considerably more advanced than the other three boys.

### Naming numerals

Ian was the only child who could consistently select and name numerals (up to 10) although matching them to the set of objects was inconsistent after number 5. Even up to 5, he made the odd error. This was not because he lacked understanding of the

concept, but because he never appeared to check his work. The other boys were able to match numerals, but had yet to learn their names and therefore were unable to match them to the correct number of objects.

Despite the effort put in by all the parents of the children with DS, (particularly Ian’s mother) to facilitate their children’s acquisition of mathematical skills (including a programme designed by Lawson (1993) to facilitate self-correction in counting), their number skills were limited, not firmly established and in some ways more like that of 2-3 year olds. The two typically developing boys (Jacob and Neil) had acquired all of the skills in Table 22, although there were no opportunities to observe whether Neil could match numerals to sets. When tested by his teacher, Jacob could recognise the numerals to 5. When she showed him the numerals from 6 to 10, he said that he did not know them. However, in the context of a game at kindergarten, he matched objects with their correct numerals up to 10 accurately, which suggested that he did have the ability to recognise numerals and match them with their corresponding sets up to 10.

In summary, the skills the children with DS had acquired were more limited, inconsistent and restricted than those of the typically developing boys. Some of the basic principles were not well understood (for example, the cardinality principle, that all items need to be counted, but only once) and a critical skill necessary to improve performance (the ability to self-check) was absent in all but one child (Jonathan). Even then, Jonathan only displayed this ability in a specific context.

**8.2: Case Studies (Ian, Mark, Jonathan)**

This section describes each boy’s 1) mathematical skills on school entry (obtained from early intervention records), 2) behaviour/participation in mathematics instruction, 3) the classroom context in which the child participated in mathematics instruction, and 4) other factors both in and outside the classroom impacting on the child at mathematics time and his mathematics skills. Table 23 outlines Ian’s mathematical skills on school entry.

8.2.1: Ian

Table 23. Ian’s Mathematical Skills on School Entry (from Early Intervention Reports)

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1.	Rote counts to 14 (may leave a number out)
2.	Counts 1:1 to 14 (may skip one or two numbers)
3.	Counts 5 or 6 randomly placed objects
4.	Matches, selects and order numerals up to 10
5.	Recognises sets to 3 without counting (pattern recognition)
6.	Sorts/gives on cue, square, circle, triangle, ovals, oblongs
7.	Seriates objects according to height up to 5
8.	Copies simple pattern e.g. rod, block, counter
9.	Continues simple alternating pattern
10.	Rearranges triangles, oblongs or smaller squares to make larger one

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Ian’s spontaneous use of skills involved: matching numeral to set (up to five objects), making an alternating pattern, labeling shapes, counting 10 objects, recognising a set of three objects instantly. However, at times, he made errors on the same or similar tasks. He never recognised his errors, which suggested that he had not completely acquired the concepts involved.

Observations of Ian, his teacher, teacher-aide and peers during mathematics time revealed features outlined in the following section.

Structuring of Class for Mathematical Tasks

A benefit of the principal’s decision to select a trained teacher as a teacher-aide for Ian’s class was the opportunity it provided for the teacher to divide the class into two units of eight pupils, to ensure the maximum amount of attention for all the children. The small numbers for each teacher enabled close supervision, and ensured that all the group members remained focused throughout the required activities. The social/moral norms emphasised throughout the rest of the curriculum were consistently reinforced during mathematics.



Opportunities for social inclusion in Ian's class were promoted by the teacher-aide structuring pairs or groups of three to explore developmental activities together, getting equipment out and putting it away together and playing mathematical card games, which involved taking turns, waiting and sharing. Because the children in Ian's group were carefully selected with regard to maturity, Ian consistently experienced appropriate role models in terms of behaviour and engagement in the required tasks as well as a safe environment in which to learn. Furthermore, within that group, the teacher or teacher-aide selected partners for particular activities. She taught the children how to resolve disputes and conflicts in the context of mathematics activities and monitored the results of her strategies. The teacher-aide maintained high standards of behaviour during mathematics time and never let Ian or others sit in positions where their attention would wander. Considerable attention was focused at the beginning of Ian's entry on how/where to sit and how to interact. As children internalised these expectations, less teacher attention was needed for these issues and the time was more fully devoted to the mathematics content. At one stage where each child had a task to do (matching up equivalent lines of counters), Ian lay on his tummy and looked around. The teacher-aide immediately noticed and said to him, "Sit up Ian and tuck your feet away." From this position Ian started to engage more actively in the task.

### Instructional Issues

The structuring, however, did not necessarily involve all children's inclusion into the task content. For example, the teacher-aide asked her group to stand beside something that was taller than them. All the children stood beside taller items except Ian who stood beside the same item another child had selected. Ian's friend, Elliot called out to Ian, "Here Ian." (pointing to a book case which was taller than Ian). Ian stood next to that bookcase and the teacher-aide praised him, ("Good boy") without checking that Ian had understood what "taller" meant. Examples like this raise the issue again of what inclusion really means. While it has been established that inclusion involves participation in the range of social interactions particular to the group, which includes "belonging" as a valued member and having friends, it must also involve authentic engagement in academic learning tasks. Facilitation of the role of learner (of culturally-appropriate skills and understandings) is essential if school is to

prepare all students for living and working in an inclusive environment. To enable their peers to acquire the role of learner, friends and classmates need to learn when it is and when it is not appropriate to help another child. Children learn early on that it is inappropriate to do certain tasks for another, such as their printing or story, but this kind of learning may need to be extended to other kinds of less visible academic tasks. Other forms of help such as alerting the child to the relevant cues may be appropriate.

The types of strategies the teacher and teacher-aide used to motivate the children did not appear to be successful with Ian. When the teacher introduced competition to motivate the children, such as “See who can get the longest line of beads” or “Let’s see whose ready first,” Ian continued engaging half-heartedly or he proceeded at his usual pace despite being able to perform the required task. Impressing the teacher that he was first finished did not motivate him to work faster or become more focused. Strategies, which presupposed that the child understood the importance of undertaking tasks correctly, were also ineffective with Ian. For example, “You’re not listening. You won’t know what to do when it comes to your turn.” It did not seem to matter to Ian whether he engaged in what was required.

Ian sometimes failed to understand the implicit purposes of tasks. For example, when the children were asked to find one item to put on their piece of cardboard and then wait, Ian fiddled with the other items and eventually placed them all on his cardboard. The teacher-aide informed me that the aim of this task involved, “the concept of one....” This information however, was not always specified to the children. Sometimes, it was given at the beginning, but it is unlikely that Ian retained it. This did not seem to matter for the others in the group, but Ian did not have a schema for how the assigned task on number one fitted into the wider picture of the number line. Without such a schema, it would be difficult to accurately engage in and acquire the expected learning outcomes from the specified task.

There were also incidents where Ian did not respond to instructions because some of the instruction was implicit and not made explicit. One such situation occurred when the children were asked to compare one another’s height. When the teacher-aide

asked, “Who do you think is taller, Lucy or Philip?” Lucy and Philip were told to stand in front of the group back to back, so that the group could decide who was taller. This expectation (of standing in front of the group for comparing heights) was established at the beginning of the lesson and as the lesson proceeded, the teacher-aide used the instruction less and less. The other children understood the expectation, but when the teacher-aide asked, “Do you think Alex is taller than Ian?” Ian remained seated until a friend made the implicit explicit by saying, “Come on Ian.” At this point, Ian stood up back to back with Alex. This incident of a peer providing an important cue also highlights how social inclusion can be facilitative of academic inclusion.

Ian frequently obtained the ‘right’ answers to tasks, but observations indicated that he had not developed the thinking processes intended to produce these ‘right’ answers. Ian would imitate the previous child’s answer, which gave the impression that he had understood. For example, on one occasion, the teacher-aide asked each child to compare the counters in their hand with the counters in their line.

The teacher-aide asked Lucy (who was before Ian), “Do you think you might have not enough or too many?” She glanced at her line, then at her handful of counters and replied, “Too many.” The teacher-aide asked Ian, “What about you, Ian?” Ian also replied, “Too many.” This was correct and he was praised for his answer. However, he answered without looking at either his pile or handful. When later he was told to “Match them (the counters) up and see” (to see if he had sufficient counters), he did nothing.

This suggested that he did not actually know what he was comparing when asked to predict the equivalence of a set of random counters against his existing set.

Suggestions for extending Ian’s thinking about tasks were also ineffective even when Ian had previously demonstrated competence at the task. He continued to use the materials in a low-level way as soon as the teacher-aide’s attention was diverted. For example,

The teacher-aide enthusiastically said to Ian, “Let’s find some round things.” She finds some round things and asks him, “Can you find some more round things?” Ian looks briefly, then starts flicking some items about.

Despite several more attempts at involving him in this sorting task, Ian continued to play with the materials in an exploratory way (throwing, flicking, touching, crinkling).

Ian had a complete lack of awareness of when he made an error and displayed no self-correcting skills. The teacher-aide also did not facilitate their acquisition, as she did not query how Ian obtained his answer(s), nor did she help him identify his errors. For example, when Ian gave an incorrect cardinal number for the set on the memory number cards, he was asked to count the set again and again. He accurately counted to 4 each time, but still gave the cardinal number as 6 when asked, "So how many have you got?" Ian did not know that the last number counted becomes the cardinal number of the set and the teacher-aide did not identify or provide the information to correct the problem.

The teacher and teacher-aide made various attempts at integrating some of the information on DS into the mathematics programme. They unobtrusively reduced the amount of material to facilitate Ian's success at tasks, and they simplified instructions at times.

While Ian experienced social inclusion at mathematics time and the teacher-aide used the mathematics tasks to promote such inclusion, unlike the more interactive teaching, which took place during oracy and literacy, mathematics instruction was more one-directional. Children including Ian were expected to engage in specific tasks requiring right answers, but often they were not given access to the kinds of processes necessary for producing those answers. This finding is consistent with previous studies of mathematics teaching (Kuwahara Lang, 1999; Putnam, Heaton, Prawatt & Remillard, 1992), which also showed how children had few opportunities for demonstrating and discussing their understandings. Instead, they were shown or told how to get the answer without opportunities for actively constructing their own understandings, necessary for meaningful learning (Resnick, 1987; Tharp, 1993). On several occasions, there was no information given within Ian's zone of proximal development concerning the task's purpose and content and no feedback regarding how to improve performance. Sometimes, Ian merely copied the performance of others and at other times, peers in their efforts to include provided the right answer

(possibly unbeknown to the teacher-aide) for which Ian was praised. The teacher-aide did not recognise that this kind of inclusion interfered with Ian's taking a more active role in the learning process necessary for enhanced mathematical thinking and his peers learning more appropriate forms of inclusion in similar academic contexts. Clearly, the child experiencing belonging as a valued participant, the teacher attending to the management of the group, specifying social norms and applying the research on DS were insufficient on their own for the child to adopt the role of active learner. Whether or not children with DS can acquire more advanced forms of mathematical thinking is unclear from past research. The current data suggest that it is not possible to ascertain what gains can be achieved without children's participation in an effective learning context and important components of that context were absent from this case study, which highlighted successful outcomes on all other dimensions.

#### Peer Interaction

The kinds of interactions peers engaged in with Ian were socially inclusive, but generally they did not involve task content. The range of interactions included the following:

- i) Offering of materials: When Ian and another two boys were assigned plasticene, one of the boys offered Ian some more, "Do you want a bigger ball (of plasticene)?" Ian initiated collecting up equipment at the end of a mathematics lesson and peers readily handed their pieces to him.
- ii) Accepting Ian as onlooker: The children did not mind Ian watching as they engaged in the assigned mathematics tasks
- iii) Answering questions: For instance, Ian asked Catherine about her sore knee, "Is it sore?" Catherine - Ian, "Yes, it is sore."
- iv) Helping Ian find the object for an assigned task.
- v) Agreeing with the teacher aide that Ian should have the final pair of Snap cards, given the circumstances.
- vi) Invitation to participate: Erin asks Ian, "Watch this!" She shows Ian the spinning water wheel. He looks, both spin it, then return to their respective activities in the sand.

vii) Ian offering relevant materials: for instance, handing Philip a piece of sheepskin to place on his card to represent one object.

There were also occasional incidents where peers in their efforts to include Ian, provided him with the solution to problems, even though it was clear that Ian had not understood the task requirements.

At the same time, Ian regularly excluded himself from his peers by interfering with their materials during specified activities and ignoring their requests to terminate his actions. Even when he engaged in antisocial actions, peers showed tolerance and made various attempts at including him before resorting to adult support. For example, when Ian took some of Philip's sticks, even though he had some in his own set, Philip tried to explain to Ian, "No. You've got those sticks. See." Philip holds out his hand for Ian to give them back. Ian puts them in his container. Philip takes them back out and arranges them again for his task. Again, Ian gathers them up and puts them away. Philip then says to him in an exasperated tone, "Ian!" to which Ian responds, "Get away." Philip then threatens him with telling the teacher to which Ian does not respond. Eventually Philip does tell the teacher.

Despite his lack of contribution to task content, Ian contributed socially by helping peers tidy their equipment, gathering up materials, instigating clapping when a peer obtained a matching pair (of cards) and by joining in clapping for a peer's success.

'Avoidant' behaviours

Ian's behaviour during mathematics time indicated he was reluctant to engage in the academic content of tasks. His avoidance is likely to have contributed to his minimal engagement in the content of the activities. The range of avoidant behaviours is listed in Table 24.

Table 24. Behaviours Characteristic of Ian at Mathematics Time

---

1.	Uses no self-checking skills
2.	Explores the materials in a task-irrelevant way
3.	Resists: ‘Distracts’ the teacher by ‘opting out’ or focussing her attention elsewhere
4.	Limited/no perseverance at task completion
5.	Explores/uses nearby materials other than assigned materials
6.	Rushes in to use materials or do activity before explanation
7.	Flicks, throws materials
8.	Claps for self when task performed only partially correctly
9.	Resists physical prompting to perform task
10.	Shows most enthusiasm and co-operation when tidying the materials

---

Ian engaged in ‘distracting’ behaviours during most mathematics sessions. These included telling the teacher-aide “I tired.” “Tired floor” when mathematics was announced and during tasks which were intellectually challenging, such as picture dominoes. During picture dominoes, Ian placed most of the cards in a line beside each other, regardless of the pictures on them. When the teacher-aide said, “I don’t think that the ladybird fits there, Ian replied, “Tired.” Ian’s ‘tiredness’ was never an issue at the end of mathematics and during subsequent activities, thus suggesting it was not genuine tiredness, but specific to the content of mathematics and possibly for tasks he perceived as challenging. During the tidy up, Ian was always enthusiastic, even to the extent of energetically helping other groups to do their tidying up. Other ‘distracting’ behaviours included focussing on an irrelevant object such as his handkerchief or someone’s sticking plaster.

Ian also distracted the teacher-aide by initiating activities with unrelated equipment. Using the equipment in inappropriate ways such as by throwing the materials back in the box and wanting a turn at wearing the teacher-aide’s glasses may also have been behaviours used to distract the teacher-aide from the specified tasks.

Unless specifically directed, Ian never engaged in any tasks that challenged his thinking. At times he would perform the task asked of him, but at a lower level than required even though he was capable of performing at the required level. For example, after bead threading, he was asked to put all the square beads back in one container. Ian placed all the beads back in the same container. When the teacher-aide asked him, "Where do they go?" (handing him some square beads), he immediately put them in the container for square beads illustrating that he did know how to sort the different shaped beads. Furthermore, he was observed sorting different shaped beads at home with minimal help.

Ian's difficulty with attending to the entirety of situations was evident by the way he clapped for himself when he was only partially correct. When undertaking some BSM matching jigsaw puzzles which required attending to the correct colour, pattern and shape, Ian clapped from himself when the pieces fitted correctly, regardless of whether the colour or pattern matched.

#### Other factors affecting Ian's mathematical development

Ian's mother was particularly keen for Ian to do well at mathematics and was striving for him to achieve school certificate mathematics. She stated, "Maybe if he got 50" (in school certificate mathematics), she would be delighted. She continued extending his counting skills, reinforcing whatever skills his teacher felt that he needed help with (for example, patterning, seriation) and continued to facilitate skills he had not completely acquired while participating in the early intervention programme. His mother did express concern however, about no longer knowing as precisely as before school entry how to most effectively facilitate his mathematical development.

I feel a bit helpless because I've always known what he needs to learn and I've been able to involve it in day-to-day things, whereas now I can't really.... I sort of feel in limbo...I mean the whole idea of early intervention...we'd try and facilitate the next step instead of waiting for skills to happen. I miss that ... there's a big chance that Ian will fall behind or that he won't be up with his peers at a certain stage whereas he could have been if I'd known what they'd be learning ahead of time ... like I suppose adding and subtracting...I don't know whether I should be starting on adding now ... I still wish I could have someone who could give me things, warn me, you know like MM (therapist at early intervention)." The teacher's new to it too.



Despite Ian’s mother’s concern, she continued to provide opportunities for extending Ian’s mathematical development. This conveyed to him the importance and value placed on mathematical skills and Ian frequently used mathematical skills throughout the day. However, unlike the contrast children who used their number skills as tools to their advantage (for example, to boast about having the most), what motivated Ian to count things was less clear. He would count the number of pencils in a tin, children on the mat, or puppets on a stand, although the purpose of such counting was not evident.

8.2.2: Mark

Mark’s mathematical skills on school entry are presented in Table 25.

Table 25. Mark’s Mathematical Skills on School Entry (from Early Intervention Reports)

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1.	Matches sets to 2, sometimes 3
2.	Rote counts to 2 (early intervention), to 4 (home)
3.	Gives 1 or 2 objects on request
4.	Counts objects. Points 1:1 and says, 1, 2 clearly
5.	Sorts all shapes correctly. Gives circles and triangles on cue
6.	Seriates 5 rods or blocks
7.	Gives biggest and smallest items on cue
8.	Matches numerals to 4 (may need some prompting)

---

As is evident from Table 25, Mark’s mathematical skills were still in the emergent stages and observations indicated that they were not yet consolidated or stable.

Structuring of Class for Mathematics Tasks

The participants in Mark’s class were eight children with intellectual impairments aged 6-9 years. The teacher taught the class as a whole, and at least one teacher-aide was present.

## Instructional Issues

The mathematics curriculum was presented in a non-linear manner. A variety of themes were undertaken on a weekly basis, for example, shapes, colours, clocks or numbers. The teacher stated,

“After lunch, it’s a mathematics-based programme. We’ve just finished doing our shapes and colours, sorting big and little and we did thick and thin and we’re on to time-based things and now we’re doing the days of the week. We’re making clocks at the moment. ....then we’ll go onto something else.”

There did not appear to be any evaluation of what the children did or did not learn from these topics and no subsequent teaching goals based on what the children still needed to learn. Within these ‘topics’, there was no match between what Mark could do and the kinds of tasks he was engaged in. The early intervention reports and Mark’s behaviour indicated that he could sort different shapes reliably and select circles and triangles on cue. Yet during mathematics time, apart from Mark’s being asked to select a square which he did through a process of elimination, no attention was focussed on the attributes of a square, or generalisation of a square shape to other objects.

The number teaching activities were not related to what Mark could or could not do. The lesson on Number 2 confused Mark because it required more advanced skills than he possessed. Mark was still at the stage of counting distinctly separate objects in a row when he could physically move or touch them. The task required the recognition of sets on one picture (for example, legs, arms) from non-sets (other parts of the body) and multiple aspects of number 2 (for example, different sets of two on the same paper resulted in 10 actual pictures). For example, on his sheet of paper was a picture of 1 baby (1 object), which was there because it had 2 arms, 2 legs, 2 nostrils and so forth. On the same sheet, he had separate sets of 2 objects (for example, 2 apples on the one picture). The end-result showed a sheet full of pictures (clearly more than 2) from which Mark presumably had to deduce that it consisted of several sets of pairs. Whilst Mark received help from the teacher-aide during this task, the end-result and process was confusing.

The mathematics concepts involved in the activities often contained multiple dimensions. The children needed to exclude simultaneously the irrelevant dimensions and identify the relevant task components. The process of understanding was further hampered by the disparate nature of the teaching materials, such as using different media to illustrate “thickness” instead of two of a kind. Mark could not make the necessary connections between these, and his teacher failed to recognise his lack of understanding. Both issues are illustrated in the following episode.

Teacher - Mark, “Do you want thick or thin paint? You tell me.” The teacher shows him the 2 containers (one of thin red paint, the other of thick yellow paint). Mark points to the red thin paint and vocalises hesitatingly. The teacher asks him again, “Thick or thin?” Again Mark vocalises hesitatingly. Teacher - Mark, “I can’t hear. Thick or thin? You choose.” Mark says, “Paint.” Teacher - Mark, “You can have some paint.” Mark vocalises, then leans forward to reach a container of paint. The teacher stops him and shows him the two containers asking again, “Thick or thin?” Mark replies, “Thin.” Teacher - Mark, “Good boy” and gives him the thin paint. He starts painting. The teacher spends the next seven minutes labeling Mark’s use of the thick or thin paint depending on which he is using. To her final comment, “What a lovely thick yellow painting and here’s your thick yellow paint”, Mark yells out, “No! Shut up!”

While the teacher’s aim was to facilitate Mark’s learning of the concept, he did not understand it. While the teacher had used the words repeatedly, Mark did not have any hands-on experience with suitable concrete materials, which encouraged specific focus on the concept being taught assisted by appropriate teacher dialogue.

The way some mathematics concepts were taught may have given Mark the message that these concepts were nouns as opposed to attributes of the nouns. Before the topic of ‘thick/thin’ was introduced, it was never clear whether Mark actually knew the nouns used to illustrate the concepts (for example, bangles, wool or cardboard). He may well have thought that the items were actually called “thick” or “thin” in view of the fact that the descriptor and noun were only erratically used together, for instance, “thick wool.”

The implicit aspects of tasks or situations were seldom made explicit. For example, when Mark was asked to collect two magazines and he returned with one, he was given no information about what “2” might look like. Again, he was told to get “2.”

When he returned with an armful, again the teacher did not help him count out, “1, 2.” Instead, she laid two aside (a process he was not part of), then told him to return the others.

Mark did not use any self-checking skills and their acquisition was not facilitated. For example, when Mark was required to pick up a square, he picked up a circle (the nearest shape) and the teacher informed him that this was not a square. He returned the circle and picked up the next-nearest shape (a square) and was praised for this. He did not appear to check the shape, nor was he required to do so.

Mark’s understanding of concepts was not checked out. This had two significant consequences, in that lack of comprehension resulting in non-compliance, was labelled “naughty” by his peers and caused frustration on the part of his teacher. It also prevented her selecting appropriate learning tasks. This was evident when he was asked to select a thin and a thick pasting brush. He picked up a thick one and was then asked to select a thin one. He made several attempts, but constantly picked up thick ones (they were nearest), which he was told to put back. His ongoing attempts at selecting a thin brush suggested that he was not resistant to doing the task. However, given that he did not know what the teacher meant, nor was he able to communicate his lack of understanding, the context denied him the opportunity to participate in a process conducive to facilitative inclusion. He then stopped trying to select a thin brush and fiddled with the thick one already selected. When asked to select a thin brush again, he threw the thick one away. The teacher did not recognise that Mark did not understand what was required of him or that she was not providing him with a meaningful process with which to acquire these understandings. His responses (of frustration) were the only ways available to him to communicate his inability to make sense of (for him) an impossible learning situation.

The teacher assessed Mark’s knowledge by asking him to thread several pairs of different coloured beads onto a string. She reported that his performance on this task was erratic. The task was unlikely to give an accurate assessment of his understanding of “two”, as it involved attention to both number and colour. Mark

could complete the task correctly by matching, without understanding of cardinality.

Peer Interaction

Classmates did not initiate any interactions with Mark, although several labeled him “naughty” publicly during the episode when he failed to select the thin brush. Interactions initiated by Mark were more often negative than positive and none involved any task content.

‘Avoidant’ behaviours

Like Ian, Mark also engaged in task avoidance, albeit to a lesser extent. The more art and craft based nature of the activities were less challenging than those presented in the mainstream classrooms. The behaviours characteristic of Mark during mathematics time are listed in Table 26.

Table 26. Behaviours Characteristic of Mark at Mathematics Time

---

1. Uses no self-checking skills
2. Low task persistence
3. Explores the materials in a task irrelevant way
4. Flicks, throws, scatters materials
5. Fails to ascertain the most effective way to undertake a task

---

Mark showed low persistence on any assigned tasks, even if he was capable of doing them such as sorting big and little circles. The teacher needed to constantly prompt him with cues such as “And another big one” for him to complete the task. When she did not, he would sort one shape and then stop.

Mark used most of the materials in a task-irrelevant way, such as touching, looking closely, mouthing, shaking, covering his eyes and fiddling with the items (mainly shapes and small objects). He was also observed ‘posting’ two different thicknesses of cardboard down the slot/hand-grip of a nearby stool. Tipping things out, throwing and scattering the materials were also characteristic of Mark’s behaviour.

In summary, the classroom context in which mathematics instruction took place did not facilitate Mark's development in mathematics. Skills already acquired were not extended and essential skills needed to facilitate learning of content such as promoting self-checking skills, using the materials appropriately and behaving more socially appropriately with peers were not targeted. Being amongst children who were all limited in their abilities and social behaviours did not provide him with the kinds of role models that placement amongst typically developing children could have provided. The teacher was unsure how to assess Mark and did not see mathematics (or any other academic learning) as a priority. Furthermore, the mathematics lessons observed involved focusing on multiple activities and dimensions of concepts, which probably hindered Mark's learning of the targeted concepts.

### **Other factors affecting Mark's Mathematical Development**

As with the other academic subjects, less time was spent on the content of mathematics than in the regular classes. While working towards the goal of matching and selecting number symbols was agreed upon at the IEP meeting, activities leading towards that goal were never observed. His parents were also not informed about what Mark was doing in mathematics or in fact, if he was doing any. His mother reported four months after Mark's school entry,

"I don't know whether he's doing that yet (mathematics). I wouldn't have a clue."

If Mark's parents were unfamiliar with what specific mathematics skills were being taught in the classroom, to consolidate and promote their generalisation in other settings and his teacher were unsure of how to assess Mark and what to teach him, then Mark's opportunities for mathematical development were inevitably restricted.

While the teacher was aware of the professional support available, she did not utilise any to facilitate Mark's mathematical development. As in the case with his literacy, if the parents assume that the teacher holds the expertise when in fact she does not, then the child's development is likely to be compromised. Children with impairments can then easily be blamed for their lack of competence when in fact, the necessary conditions for their facilitation are lacking.

8.2.3: Jonathan

Table 27 shows Jonathan’s mathematical abilities on school entry.

Table 27. Jonathan’s Mathematical Skills on School Entry (from Early Intervention Reports)

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1.	Rote counts to 14 (may leave odd number out)
2.	Counts 1:1, 10 objects in a line
3.	Gives up to 3 objects on request
4.	Matches sets to 3 (not always consistent)
5.	Sorts, selects and names, circles, squares and triangles
6.	Seriates 5 objects or pictures
7.	Copies simple pattern
8.	Continues simple alternating pattern, e.g. car, block, car, block...
9.	Matches numerals to 5, but does not select on cue

---

As can be seen in Table 27, Jonathan had acquired some basic mathematical skills, some of which he used spontaneously in play or other curriculum subjects. Those he used spontaneously at school included: one-to-one counting to 3 each time he bounced the ball, pointing out 2 spiders in a book (“2 spider”(s)), counting out 2 children with specific characteristics (children with the same name) from a group of 5 children and pointing out, “2 eyes” on a teddy bear. However, at other times, he made errors on the same or similar tasks. He failed to correct his own errors, except in one specific context.

Structuring of Class for Mathematical Tasks

Jonathan was in a class, which initially numbered 17 and increased to 28 by the end of the term. His teacher divided the class into three groups of 6-9 children and Jonathan was placed in a group of the newest entrants, most of whom lacked the behavioural skills required to profit from instruction in the way it was presented. His teacher-aide was not present during mathematics time. During activities, he was often paired with other children with ‘special needs.’ While the teacher worked with one group, the other two groups were required to work independently in pairs or by themselves.

Children were required to sit, and to interact in prescribed ways, but these norms were only intermittently enforced. Jonathan's teacher often did not specify what was required and she often reacted after situations got out of control. The latter was evident on an occasion when Jonathan and his partner had been assigned the task of creating alternating patterns. They were then left to the task for the next 12 minutes, while the teacher attended to other children. She only returned after Jonathan had disrupted his partner's and other children's patterns and emptied a large amount of equipment on the floor. On finally noticing Jonathan's inappropriate behaviour, the teacher asked Jonathan to get his coat and bag ready to go home to which his partner called out loudly, "GOOD!"

Jonathan's mother observed similar episodes when the teacher did not monitor the children's activities and then expressed annoyance that the children had performed the tasks incorrectly. For example, on a day she was a parent-helper, the children in Jonathan's group were making sets of 1, 2, or 3 items. While two out of the seven children did what was expected, the others copied one child who used the materials to make designs and pictures. The teacher being reactive rather than proactive in her management had major implications for Jonathan. He had greater difficulty attending to the relevant cues and ascertaining in which context it was appropriate to engage in which behaviour. His frequent exposure to the inappropriate peer models contributed to his internalisation of such behaviour.

### Instructional Issues

The instructions and questions the teacher used frequently contained information or concepts not yet acquired by Jonathan, which made it difficult for him to undertake some of the tasks. For example, at one stage he was asked to, "Find the mistake in my pattern." (teacher's alternating pattern). Jonathan did not understand the word, 'mistake.' He used the word, "wrong" when he made or noticed a mistake.

Implicit aspects of tasks were seldom spelt out. For example, the teacher showed the class a large colourful picture, which contained many different shapes. The children were asked to point out a shape on the picture and when most had already done so, the teacher asked, "Who hasn't had a turn and would like a turn at showing me



something (a shape)?" Although it was probably self-evident to others that she was talking about shapes, it seemed unlikely that Jonathan understood this. Likewise, in the case of expectations for the tasks to be completed, the teacher had certain outcomes in mind, such as completing assigned tasks, which were understood by most of the typically developing children, but not by the child with DS.

Unlike Ian and Mark, Jonathan showed some error awareness. For example, when the children were completing some cardboard puzzles which required matching pieces not only for size, but also for colour and pattern (three dimensions simultaneously), Jonathan picked up a blue chimney. He was just about to place this piece in his puzzle of a yellow house, when he stopped (recognising that it was the wrong colour and possibly that it had the wrong pattern). He looked at the puzzle of his classmate next to him who was completing the blue house with same pattern as the chimney piece and he placed it correctly in his classmate's puzzle. However, Jonathan then proceeded to make a similar error by placing a red chimney on his yellow house one which matched the same pattern (dots). This suggests that his awareness of errors was not fully established. He seemed to be able to attend to one or at the most two salient dimensions only (colour or pattern).

The other incident of self-correction occurred when Jonathan was matching objects such as the cuisenaire rods onto a marked picture outline (for example, robot) on cardboard. After his mother pointed out that one of the rods extended beyond the outline ("It's too big. Put it back."), he selected another rod, which was also too big. However, he realised this himself by putting it back when he noticed it extending over the outline. He then selected two smaller rods, which fitted exactly into the space.

Apart from these incidents when his mother was nearby, Jonathan showed no self-correction or error awareness, even when visible models were available such as peers undertaking the same task. Possibly Jonathan was not yet aware of the importance of undertaking tasks correctly or that the teacher had a specific aim in mind for how the materials should be used. However, as in printing, he did understand what he should be doing when his mother was present, even if she was not directly involved with him. He used her as a discriminative stimulus for using these skills, which he never

did in the presence of his teachers.

The instructional context of the teaching (as in other implicit and formal curriculum areas) precluded Jonathan's academic inclusion in mathematics. Jonathan and his peers could not get into the mathematical content, because interactions concerned the nature of the relationship and could not move beyond that point without assistance. Instead of seeing Jonathan as a viable partner with whom to participate in the mathematical activities, peers rejected him because of their prior assessment, which labeled him as a deviant. The rigid teaching structure left no room for children to get to know multiple aspects of each other as whole individuals, necessary for effective engagement in the task content.

### Peer Interaction

Jonathan's interactions with his peers was marked with hostility and he had no friends. He was always rejected as a potential partner. When he was paired with classmates, his peers did not explain things, listen to his contributions, share materials with him, take turns or try different ways of understanding him. They criticised him for his 'insignificant' behaviours and the content of his work to each other and ignored his polite requests. Peers ignored Jonathan's attempts at joining in non-mathematics-related conversation. At mathematics time, he experienced the same kind of exclusion as in other contexts. He was ignored, treated as a much younger child, criticised and overtly rejected for both appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. His peers adopted an authoritarian attitude to Jonathan, including him only as a lower-status member. This was manifest in their taking over tasks, rather than participating equally with Jonathan. Jonathan also excluded himself at times, by destroying other's work, taking out equipment they had tidied up, hitting and moving their materials. It is impossible to ascertain how much 'inappropriate' behaviour was due to his classmates' exclusion of him at mathematics time, his exclusion generally and/or to other factors such as his uncertainty as to what to do.

On one occasion, Jonathan's partner included him in the task content in the manner prescribed by the teacher, but the attempt failed because the instructions were not

meaningful to Jonathan, and his partner did not find another suitable method of engaging him.

Jonathan was in a group of children who frequently demonstrated anti-social behaviours and who harassed Jonathan during other curriculum subjects, particularly when the teacher was unavailable or engaged elsewhere. The children Jonathan partnered did not work on any of the tasks interactively with him, nor did the teacher ever model or discuss how to work together. What usually happened on these occasions was that the teacher briefly showed Jonathan what the task was, for example, helped him start an alternating pattern, but she did not show him or his partner how they might do the task together. Activities undertaken in pairs were never monitored. The result was that each performed the task independently oblivious of the other.

‘Avoidant’ behaviours

Jonathan’s behaviour at mathematics time also indicated resistance to actively engaging in the academic content of the tasks. He avoided getting involved even when he was capable of doing the task. These avoidance behaviours are listed in Table 28.

Table 28. Behaviours Characteristic of Jonathan at Mathematics Time

1.	Explores the materials in a task-irrelevant way
2.	No perseverance to complete required tasks
3.	Rushes and uses materials before teacher explains task
4.	Throws and scatters the materials
5.	Uses materials to engage in lower level tasks
6.	Opts out or leaves tasks

Examples of Jonathan’s use of the materials in a task-irrelevant way included shaking, dropping handfuls of counters and watching them fall, scribbling on the paper instead of identifying the shapes and colouring them in. While Jonathan always attempted to do something in relation to the required task, for example, colour in one shape or

arrange the counters in some way even if it was not the alternating pattern as specified, he only persevered when an adult specified what was required. If not, he resorted to a lower level task or in some instances wandering about or exploring other children's materials. Jonathan did not reflect on tasks or attend to instructions prior to using the materials. On the day he was expected to colour in shapes, Jonathan got as far as printing his name on the sheet with minimal help and colouring in about three triangles before opting out.

#### Other factors affecting Jonathan's mathematical development

The IEP long-term goal, "Jonathan will take part in mathematics topics and work within a group" did not state what Jonathan and his peers would achieve from participation. This goal was already being achieved as Jonathan was already taking part in mathematics topics within a group, but the processes he was engaged in were not conducive to facilitative inclusion. The children in Jonathan's mathematics group were already expressing antagonism towards him in other contexts, particularly the more social unstructured times of lunch, play and transition times. The mathematics group was therefore not a safe setting in which he could focus on any mathematics content. The teacher was not aware of his exclusion, only reporting that she had seen Jonathan behave in anti-social ways to his peers, but never in reverse.

The IEP goal did not provide for extension of Jonathan's existing mathematical skills, as it concentrated on Jonathan's being part of the class (already occurring) rather than a progressive plan of teaching. This did nothing to help Jonathan's parents to understand the content of the curriculum, and give them a basis for extending Jonathan's mathematical skills at home.

Throughout the mathematics sessions, Jonathan received considerable reinforcement from his peers for confirming his deviant status. For him, 'the world' made little sense, even when he engaged in close approximations of typical behaviour. For example, when Jonathan asked a peer twice for the two blocks that he held out towards him ("Me please?") accompanied by appropriate eye contact and intonation, the peer totally ignored his request as if he did not exist. Similarly, incidents involving being intensely stared at and being poked, prodded and told to "Get away"

when merely attending to the teacher’s instructions, may also have contributed to his understanding that the world makes little sense.

Also, because there were no content-related mathematics goals specified at the IEP, Jonathan’s parents were not informed as to how they might best facilitate aspects of his mathematical development at home. Familiarisation with the content in the home setting could enhance development at school, even though it would be unlikely to address the more fundamental issue of his social and academic exclusion at school.

**8.3: Summary of Chapter Eight**

While all the children, including Richard (for whom some initial data were obtained, see Table 22) demonstrated differing levels of competence and their mathematics lessons in class were vastly different, their engagement or lack of engagement in certain behaviours at mathematics time showed several similarities. They also differed from those of the typically developing boys. These behaviours are listed in Table 29.

Table 29. Behaviours During Mathematics Regularly Engaged in by Ian, Mark, Jonathan and Richard

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1.	No self-checking skills evident after performance of a task*
2.	No schema concerning the ‘correctness’ of tasks
3.	No indication of the teacher’s purpose for use of the materials: Use of the materials in more immature ways
4.	Task persistence - low or non-existent.
5.	Frequent resistance to participation**
6.	Inflexible use of skills
7.	Less able to spontaneously inhibit responses**
8.	Flicks, throws, scatters materials
9.	Never challenges self or extends skills spontaneously
10.	Inconsistent display of skills
11.	No peer interaction related to content

---

\* Some awareness by Jonathan when mother present

\*\* Not observed with Mark since fewer episodes were involved and tasks were less challenging than in mainstream classes

All the children with DS lacked self-checking skills at both the beginning and end of school entry. The following examples illustrate the children’s lack of self-checking skills when asked to perform a task within their capabilities.

Since Jonathan showed some error awareness when his mother was parent-helping in his vicinity, this suggests that it is possible for children with DS to acquire some ability in detecting errors. However, rarely did any of the teachers give the children with DS access to this process as the emphasis was almost exclusively on the correct answer.

All the children tended to explore or use the materials prior to the teacher explaining what she wanted done with them. This always involved a lower level of skills than what they were capable of.

Their performance of mathematical skills was highly inconsistent. Even skills well within their grasp were inconsistently displayed and any minor variations in task demands usually resulted in a lower level of performance.

‘Opting’ out or distracting behaviour was used when tasks were challenging or perceived as challenging and all the children had difficulty inhibiting responses. Despite their competencies at being able to complete certain assigned tasks, when left to their own devices, they frequently did not do so. Instead, they demonstrated regular throwing, scattering and flicking about of the mathematics materials, particularly when the teacher was busy with other children.

The two typically developing boys did not engage in any of the behaviours shown in Table 29. Not only did they undertake the assigned tasks with the materials, they also engaged in content-related talk with their peers and often experimented with different ways of doing the task.

The contexts all showed similar as well as different deficiencies. None emphasised error awareness and self-checking skills and none helped peers engage the child with DS in the actual content of the tasks. While Ian’s teachers used the activities to promote social inclusion, which provided a safe environment for all the children in which to learn, the other teachers promoted neither social nor academic inclusion. In all of the classrooms, the way tasks were structured frequently enabled the children with DS to give the appearance of understanding when there were signs that they had not actually understood. For example, Mark was praised for selecting a thick paint brush. However, it was the nearest brush and he kept selecting thick brushes even when asked to select a thin brush, thus indicating that he had not understood the concept.

The more implicit aspects of tasks were seldom specified by any of the teachers. This made learning more difficult for the children with DS in view of their greater inability to make incidental connections, necessary for more advanced learning. For example, without someone summarising and emphasising that the last number counted is the cardinal number of the whole set, they are less likely to make this connection

spontaneously. There was also no professional monitoring of what the children were doing in mathematics to enable the teachers and parents to enhance their development. While each of the teachers attempted to facilitate the child's development as best they were able, the data identified deficiencies in all of the contexts, of which they were not aware. If teachers lack awareness and parents have no access to information to support their children's mathematical skills beyond the school setting, then the children's contexts for mathematical learning are not as facilitative of development as they might be.

Merely belonging as a valued participant was insufficient for inclusion into the task content during mathematics especially when the child sabotages his peers and teachers' inclusive endeavours by resisting participation. Inclusive practices, such as being provided with good role models in small well-organised groups, using opportunities throughout to promote inclusion were less effective in mathematics than they were during literacy-based subjects or tasks involving social dimensions (for instance, developmental).

At the same time, aspects of the contexts hindered the acquisition of mathematical skills by the children with DS (and possibly others). The presence of traditional teaching of mathematics with an emphasis on engaging in specific procedures "leading to right answers" (Biddulph & Taylor, 1995) did not provide the children with access to processes essential for obtaining those right answers.



## CHAPTER 9: DISCUSSION: INTERPRETING THE DATA

### 9.1: Summary of Main Findings

Due to shifts in understandings of disability, children with DS (and other impairments) can now expect participation in regular educational and community settings. The large-scale exclusion of persons with impairments was based on the deficit model of disability in which an individual's impairment was seen as an all-encompassing personal deficit, illness or tragedy that dominated all aspects of her/his life. This model provides an inadequate theory for explaining learning and development as it fails to take into account the ways in which social, economic and political factors create barriers to equal participation. The recent move to inclusion is based on the social construction model of disability, which rejects the exclusive focus on the 'deficient' individual but views disability as a function of the child's immediate and distal contexts. If however, children are to be included, it makes no sense to ignore or shun all aspects of their identity and functioning. Knowledge about how DS affects functioning and other characteristics of the child needs to be understood and valued as integral parts of their being within regular school contexts for children to benefit optimally from their experiences.

Empirical studies of children with DS (and other impairments) in regular schools show both favourable and unfavourable outcomes depending on the quality of the educational experiences. When contexts were organised from the outset to accommodate the range of diversity in student characteristics, children were more likely to experience inclusion in the diverse range of roles typical of the school setting, than when they were expected to assimilate into existing systems based on uniform norms of appearing, moving and behaving.

The transition to formal schooling is an opportune time to investigate the role of contexts. Children can be observed in the two different settings of preschool and school to ascertain the effects of a change in context. Furthermore, many aspects of the inclusion process are likely to become transparent as those involved engage in actions aimed at facilitating the child's adjustment to the different settings. Processes

are also more likely to be fluid at this time and hence able to be influenced. Once children start school, studies show that patterns of interaction soon become entrenched. Studies of children with and without impairments indicate that school entry is a stressful time for children and families as new roles are learnt and relationships are established. This stress is known to be exacerbated for many children with DS (and other impairments) and their families, given that schools have evolved employing segregative policies and practices, and have a lack of experience and expertise in inclusive teaching.

Processes such as inclusion before, during and after transition to school can be effectively understood within a transactional model of development since children's characteristics and their immediate and more distal social systems constantly interact in a bi-directional manner with one another. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model, Vygotsky's (1978) theory of learning, and disability theorists' social construction models of disability have much in common with each other, given their focus on the role of contexts in learning and participation. When learning and development is conceptualised as a function of the quality of interactions with more skilled participants, children clearly need to be engaged in processes which involve interacting with peers with impairments in respectful and increasingly more mature ways. Children cannot learn to include or recognise their peers with DS as valued classmates by ongoing avoidance or by actively excluding them, and the latter cannot acquire the full range of roles necessary for optimal development without access to meaningful participation. Children therefore may need 'scaffolding' within their zones of proximal development not only in terms of the curriculum content, but also to facilitate appropriate ways of including one another.

After analysing the full range of interactions between children with and without DS the first major finding was that not all forms of inclusion were equal and developmentally enhancing to either the focal child or his classmate(s). Children could experience: a) inclusion in demeaning or inferior ways, b) inclusion in equal status roles or c) exclusion. Each of these categories occurred in a variety of forms. For example, there were more or less intimate ways children could be included as same status members. The second major finding was that even within the more

meaningful forms of inclusion as same status participants, there could be barriers to more intimate forms of inclusion. These pertained mostly to the management of relationships. They involved failure to: a) interpret one another's behaviour/intent, b) demonstrate reciprocity, c) repair breakdowns and d) establish tolerance. At the same time, there were incidents, which showed a potential for breakdown, yet the child's peers were able to repair this potential breakdown, thus enabling the play to continue. When a focal child with DS experienced inclusion into the full range of roles, it meant that his classmates had learnt a variety of social skills facilitative of that process. These included seeing beyond the impairment, valuing the child as an equal, feeling comfortable with diversity and advocating for the child in times of strife. Inclusion of this nature indicated a sense of belonging, which could provide the safety and motivation for using and developing their social, emotional, physical and cognitive skills.

At preschool, only the typically developing boys experienced inclusion into the full range of roles typical for that setting (facilitative inclusion), ranging from inclusion as politeness to being a valued member of a group or dyad. At the same time, all the boys with DS experienced only the lower forms of inclusion and were excluded from the more intimate roles. This finding is commonly reported in research studies of children with DS in regular settings (Bruni, 1982; Sinson & Wetherick, 1981). Several factors contributed to this outcome. First, the preschool norms reflected the free-choice play philosophy, the aim being for children to engage in a range of activities, irrespective of the quality of processes occurring or the outcomes. While children could achieve specific outcomes and/or be involved with others as they engaged in their activities, this was not a requirement as it was at school. Second, the disability-related practices in both preschools contributed to the children's isolation. These practices created either inferior forms and/or only lower forms of inclusion. In Ian's kindergarten, practices were based on the charity view of disability. Peers were expected to include Ian because he was considered "special" (in need of help, care and/or protection). In Jonathan's preschool, practices were based on the expectation that he would conform with and assimilate to the existing norms as a typically developing child. These were standards Jonathan could never meet, given his differences in thinking, communicating and moving associated with DS. As staff and

peers ignored these differences, he was cast into the role of deviant, certainly in the eyes of his peers who considered him 'odd.' Their response was to exclude him regularly, something the staff failed to notice as all claimed that he was well accepted by his peers. In neither centre were the jointly constructed adult and peer norms and practices expanded to accommodate the range of diversity actually present.

However, the differences in the experiences of children with and without DS were not evident at school. There was more variation between the schools than there was between the children with DS and typically developing children. Ian (DS) and Jacob who attended the same school both experienced inclusion and Jonathan (DS) and Neil who both attended another school, experienced exclusion. Mark who attended a special class but had daily experiences with typically developing children also experienced exclusion. If the characteristics of DS inevitably led to exclusion and the absence of DS resulted in inclusion, then one would expect all the boys with DS to be excluded and the typically developing boys included irrespective of settings. Furthermore, the finding that there were major changes in Ian and Neil's experiences of inclusion/exclusion after their transitions to school, provides further support for the significant role contexts play in facilitating inclusion or exclusion. Given that Neil (a competent typically developing child who was well-liked at playcentre) could not gain access to more advanced forms of inclusion, despite considerable efforts on his part involving a range of mature strategies, strongly suggested that inclusion and exclusion were not disability, but curriculum and management issues.

Apart from Ian's school, all preschools and schools adhered to the deficit model of disability. That is, principals and head teachers employed divisive discourses, which permeated all aspects of the child's classroom and wider school life. Disability or other differences were viewed as all-encompassing attributes, which needed special treatments and resources in isolation from the wider school culture. At the same time, the wider school culture was assumed to be facilitative of all other children's learning, which indeed it was not. A lack of appropriate social norms, a focus on academic outcomes, and a recitation task-structure (Bossert, 1979) in Jonathan's class made it difficult for any newcomer to become included as a valued member of the class. The children had few opportunities to experience multiple aspects of each

other's personalities. In Ian's school, the classroom and school culture was already sensitive to the heterogeneity in the student population prior to his arrival and continued to evolve in this direction after Ian's entry. In partnership with Ian's parents and their support network (early intervention programme), the principal developed a vision of what successful inclusion involved and took proactive steps to ensure its implementation. For example, he actively recruited a trained teacher for the role of teacher-aide. He ensured that she shared the same inclusive philosophy and he constructed her role as a team teacher instead of an individual aide to the child. Both teacher and teacher-aide attended to peer relationships and social norms, used tasks and procedures to promote social inclusion, used multiple competencies to evaluate tasks, made the implicit explicit, used an ecological approach to assessment and facilitated continuity between settings.

There were variations in practices in the other settings, but they all stemmed from the deficit view of disability, which mitigated against children becoming valued, included members of their classrooms. For instance, in Jonathan's school, children were publicly evaluated on a limited set of developmental criteria that were unobtainable for Jonathan. This resulted in the exclusion of newcomers, particularly those with identifiable differences such as Jonathan who immediately appeared deficient. No attention to peer relationships or social norms meant that new children like Jonathan and Neil could not easily gain access to already-established friendship groups. Where preschools and schools had no effective infrastructure to facilitate inclusion, there was no basis on which to address the more specific concerns, such as the promotion of qualitative shifts in children's social experiences. Children then remained 'stuck' experiencing only primitive forms of inclusion and various forms of exclusion. Since practices designed to assist the child with DS were implemented disconnected from the school and classroom's existing cultures, they inevitably resulted in the child's exclusion instead of inclusion. Issues relating to more distal contexts, such as the selection of which professionals and practitioners to select to enhance the process, the quality of parent-school relationships, selection and role of the teacher-aide and monitoring of the inclusion process were unproblematic when all key personnel shared the same enabling philosophy and translated this into practices affecting all of the child's experiences.

Overall, there was a strong relationship between how the teachers viewed disability and their way of promoting social relationships. Ian's teacher and teacher-aide who viewed disability as a social construction engaged in practices that promoted caring and authentic relationships among all class members. The other teachers either did nothing (leaving inclusion up to the child) or instigated practices that focused on the child's deficits (for example, providing the child with a ball, ensuring the child's safety by attaching an older child to him). Since all of these practices contributed to highlighting the child's differences or special needs in the eyes of his classmates, they were ineffective.

Since schooling is not only about social relationships, but also fulfilling the role of learner and developing more advanced culturally-valued skills and understandings, it was important to ascertain how the social processes identified impacted on the academic processes and outcomes for each child with DS. The three academic areas of the curriculum that were selected (news-time, literacy, and mathematics) were chosen because of their potential contributions to enhancing a child's quality of life in the community.

During news-time, only Ian made gains in his language, knowledge of the task requirements and spontaneous participation. His peers also included him without any hesitation. Mark and Jonathan did not acquire the procedural routines, showed minimal gains in participation (they always required cueing by an adult) and were never chosen spontaneously as partners. In fact, when asked by the teacher, classmates always resisted being partnered with them. The same contextual conditions that facilitated Ian's belonging as a valued member, also facilitated his inclusion at news-time. The teacher a) regularly specified social norms about inclusion, b) interpreted any unconventional behaviour in a valuing manner, c) used a range of procedures to facilitate shared meanings, d) modelled how to include, e) attended to the management of the group, f) made connections between oracy and literacy at the group's differing levels of understandings and, g) until all were familiar with the procedure, maintained a predictable routine. All of these conditions were absent from Mark and Jonathan's classrooms. Mark's exclusion was also exacerbated by his anti-social behaviour and not being an authentic member of the class during

news-time. These factors contributed to neither Mark nor his peers' being able to get to know one another and his peers' being less motivated to get to know him.

The findings for outcomes in literacy parallel those for news-time. Again, Ian was the only child with DS who made significant gains in both reading and print-related tasks. His teacher and teacher-aide together provided the scaffolding necessary for each child to succeed within a group, a class culture which valued all participants and saw differences as ordinary, as well as many characteristic of effective reading and writing instruction. In Mark and Jonathan's classrooms, there were no spontaneous opportunities for literacy development with adult support. In Ian's classroom, there were multiple opportunities for Ian's emerging literacy skills, even when expressed in unconventional ways, to be scaffolded to increasingly advanced levels. Since Ian was a valued participant, he also experienced frequent peer reinforcement for engaging in behaviour conducive to the acquisition of literacy. Richard's classmates' focus on controlling Richard meant that during literacy-based activities, they did not experience shared meanings. When Richard expressed interest in the content of the books he was reading, instead of his classmates participating in these literary experiences, they argued about who was in charge of Richard and whose books he preferred. Mark received the fewest opportunities for enhancing his literacy skills of all the children. He was considered unable to benefit from process writing and hence, he was excluded from participation. The content of printing tasks in class did not match Mark's actual level of development. Mark was nearly independent at printing his own name, yet all artwork was named for him and printing tasks consisted of pre-printing skills with no meaningful context. Reading consisted of a variety of different tasks with no clear goals. His teacher reported she was unable to ascertain his progress due to his inconsistent level of compliance. Jonathan, who was in a regular reading and printing group did not experience belonging in either group or with any classroom members during other times and therefore, unlike Ian did not gain access to the kind of peer support for his emerging literacy skills. In fact, many of the children in his reading and printing groups harassed him during unstructured activities. The teacher did not always manage the tasks effectively, so that the content of instruction often contained concepts outside Jonathan's zone of proximal development. Carrying out the tasks required skills that did not take into account the impact of DS (for

instance, alternating rapidly from text to picture without explicit cues). While Ian did make gains in printing, there were aspects of the instruction, which may have hindered greater gains. For example, the teacher-aide regularly used euphemisms (possibly to enhance interest) such as calling a dot a magic seed. It looked as if Ian did not understand these euphemisms because he never followed instructions containing euphemisms accurately.

All the children's development in mathematics was primitive and fragile. Although it was not possible to measure gains in the naturalistic settings of their classrooms, there were a number of processes identified, which hindered their access to more mature understandings. Even within Ian's inclusive social context, the teacher and teacher-aide regularly engaged in instructional practices, as did the other teachers, which hindered more advanced understandings. For instance, no-one helped the children develop error awareness or self-checking. The implicit aspects of numeracy tasks, such as the final number of a set representing the total number, were never made explicit. Children were regularly praised, but often they did not know what for. For example, Ian's teacher-aide asked the children to stand beside something that was taller than them. Each time Ian's peers selected an object for him to stand beside. She never checked out whether Ian understood the concept or the purpose of the activity, and she did not explain to the class the difference between facilitating one another's engagement with activities and providing task solutions. Thus, while social inclusion can be facilitative of academic inclusion, it can also be undermining if peers deprive the child of opportunities to learn new skills. There was also no monitoring of the children's learning and instruction in mathematics by professionals.

The boys with DS in the regular settings often resisted participation in mathematics similar to the way the infants with DS in Wishart and Duffy's (1990) study avoided participation in tasks they perceived as challenging. The kinds of strategies the teachers used to motivate typically developing children and their focus on specific procedures requiring "right answers" (Biddulph & Taylor, 1995) failed to motivate these boys with DS. They never learned to use the processes necessary for obtaining the right answer. Ian's aversive behaviours during mathematics placed his relationships at-risk, despite his peers' ongoing attempts at including him.



Table 30 summarises the main factors associated with successful and unsuccessful outcomes at the microsystem level of the classroom.

The table indicates that successful outcomes for the child, class, school and family involved: i) a child-centered inclusive context at the outset, ii) altering the existing class and school culture in an ongoing way to include practices appropriate to the child with DS, iii) valuing diversity and interpreting the meaning of unconventional behaviour, iv) teaching which was child-centred, interactive and provided scaffolding and feedback within children's zones of proximal development and v) active promotion of same-status reciprocal peer relationships and strategies to maintain them. In contrast, unsuccessful outcomes were related to i) practices based on the deficit/deviancy model of disability that were disconnected from the existing class culture, ii) teachers delegating responsibility for the child's learning and/or management to others, iii) interpreting issues at an individual rather than classroom/school level, iv) avoiding issues of disability and differences or promoting them in a charity way, v) an absence of social norms, vi) the presence of single criterion tasks, vii) valuing and using professionals whose practices stemmed from the deficit model, and viii) recitation task structures and/or behavioural teaching methods.

Table 30. Factors at Microsystem Level Conducive to Successful and Unsuccessful Outcomes.

	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Successful Outcomes</b>	<b>Unsuccessful Outcomes</b>
1	Responsibility	Class teacher	Delegated to aide and / or others
2	Focus	Context	Individual
3	Diversity	Valued / interpreted openly	Avoided / shunned
4	Social inclusion	Actively promoted	Not promoted
5	Social norms	Evident and enforced	Absent
6	Demeaning inclusion	Interrupted and redirected	Ignored
7	Modelling of inclusion	Teacher models	No modelling
8	Play at recess	Facilitated through contextual changes	Not facilitated or facilitated by focus on child
9	Management of groups	Consistent	Inconsistent
10	Instruction	Within zone of proximal development [ZPD] of all learners	Within ZPD of more competent children or simplified for child with DS only
11	DS issues	Integrated into instruction	Ignored
12	Focal child's inappropriate behaviour	Management strategies implemented	Ignored or incorrect focus
13	Learning-teaching framework	Child-centred / constructivist	Behavioural / recitation
14	Evaluation of tasks	Multiple qualities and outcomes	Single academic criterion
15	Continuity between settings	Actively promoted	Minimal
16	Monitoring of inclusion	Practices in relation to philosophy	Child outcomes only
17	Positioning of child	Insider	Outsider

Many of the factors in Table 30 associated with successful outcomes are part of effective teaching of all children. Teachers attending to the management of groups by keeping disruptions and distractions at bay and providing an orderly environment provide a context in which all children can more easily focus on the content (Prawatt, 1992). Current research indicates that effective teaching and learning are interactive processes which need to take place within a child's zone of proximal development [ZPD] (Tharp, 1993). For new material to make sense to the child and for her/him to acquire enhanced understandings/skills from it, more skilled learners can help the novice learner make the necessary connections between the material and what she/he already knows. At the same time the instruction must relate any new skills or understandings to the student's prior experiences and interests for enhanced motivation and understandings (Poplin, 1988). The data suggest that such a holistic/constructivist approach is applicable to children with DS as well as typically developing children. For instance, Ian showed great interest and persistence when he initiated making and writing a card for his mother (an authentic activity involving literacy). In contrast, Mark resisted pre-printing behavioural tasks, that lacked any authentic meaning for him. The kind of one-directional teaching characteristic of behavioural teaching and the recitation script commonly found in classrooms (Bossert, 1979) does not provide young children with the opportunities to develop more complex ways of thinking and acting. A basic prerequisite for learning is a warm and trusting relationship with others through which to experience the content (Maslow, 1970; Kunc, 1992). More mechanistic teaching styles such as the recitation approach and precision teaching (Sidman & Stoddard, 1966) fail to provide this critical ingredient. In these models the quality of the relationship is considered immaterial. Second, in an individual competitive climate reflective of the recitation structure of teacher-pupil interaction, children learn that specific abilities matter and reject those who do not have them (Bossert, 1979). Such exclusion hinders their feelings of safety in the group, and their ability to think effectively about the content (McArthur & Morton, 1999). Third, one-directional teaching approaches do not provide children with the kinds of skills they need to support and elaborate their emerging ideas and hinders the development of their metacognitive abilities. Children need to be able to reflect on their thoughts and actions and act appropriately in response to them for them to become more independent learners (Zimmerman,

1995). Fourth, experiences need to be meaningful in order for children to acquire enhanced understandings. During the transition to school, teachers need to promote the kind of continuity with previous experiences which facilitates both sense-making and development. Finally, since all children vary on a range of diverse characteristics (Giangreco, 1996; Lipsky & Gartner, 1996) and schools have a responsibility to enable all children to achieve optimal success (Ministry of Education, 1993), it is essential that classroom norms and practices are sensitive to and encompass the diversity present.

The data indicated that where effective teaching practices such as those listed in Table 30 were already present, the infrastructure was sufficiently robust and flexible to accommodate the additional issues raised by the child with DS with relative ease. These involved dealing with differences, forms of peer inclusion, the focal child's anti-social ways of relating, and potential learning difficulties associated with DS. This seemed possible because the teacher, teacher-aide and principal were already familiar with addressing the context when issues arose instead of blaming individuals by focusing on their deficits. Where the teaching was based on a different philosophy (for example, free-play, the traditional recitation approach or the precision teaching model), there was no infrastructure to implement any of the suggestions made by the parents or early intervention team. In these settings, teachers utilised the traditional 'individualistic gaze' (Fulcher, 1989), thereby ignoring the social context in which the inclusion/exclusion took place. Inclusion guided by charity or deficit perspectives led to children participating in a set of classroom processes different from those where the kind of teaching was based on sound pedagogical practices. The child with DS was disconnected from the overall classroom culture. With no infrastructure to facilitate social inclusion, academic inclusion was also compromised. Effective teaching and learning requires belonging (as a valued participant) as a co-requisite (Rogoff, 1990; Tharp, 1993; Vygotsky, 1981).

Table 31 presents a summary of the factors associated with successful inclusion at the more distal levels of the mesosystem and exosystem levels. The first three factors overlap with those at the microsystem level. These involve:

i) the presence of an existing school infrastructure which is capable of

accommodating the diversity present in all key participants, ii) a vision of what successful inclusive outcomes might involve with commensurate practices, and iii) a model of disability focusing on the context informing those practices.

Table 31. Factors at Mesosystem and Exosystem levels Conducive to Successful and Unsuccessful Inclusion in the Classroom

	Issue	Successful Outcomes	Unsuccessful Outcomes
1	Existing infra-structure	Accommodating of differences	Not accommodating
2	Vision of successful outcomes	Yes	No
3	Knowledge to achieve outcome	Yes	No
4	Model of disability	Social construction	Individual deficit
5	Principal	Supports all in implementing shared philosophy	Supports mostly teacher: focus on external resources
6	Professionals	Inclusive philosophy required	Any philosophy
7	Parents	Authentic partnership with sound knowledge base	Devalued or authentic but limited knowledge base
8	Meetings	Focus: parents concerns	Parent's concerns dismissed
9	Historical approach	None	On-site special units
10	Teacher-aide selection	Trained teacher with inclusive philosophy	Special education
11	Teacher-aide role	Team teaching	Attached to child
12	Teacher support	Parents and school staff with shared vision	Friendly relationships, but lack of knowledge or conflict

Unsuccessful outcomes were related to the school or preschool’s having either historical special education facilities on site and/or teachers’ having completed special education courses based on the deficit model of disability. The appropriate infrastructure (accommodation of differences in a valuing manner), model of disability (focus on context) and translation of the model into practice determined the quality or selection of the other factors. For instance, once a vision is established as

to what effective inclusion involves, the principal's role becomes clearer (for example, selecting professionals and paraprofessionals who share that vision, supporting the parents and the teacher). Facilitative inclusion requires use of the knowledge possessed by those intimately involved with the child, such as the parents and early intervention staff. It requires that this knowledge is updated and everyone is supported in the process, by arranging regular meetings and facilitating effective communication.

When schools had no clear vision of what facilitative inclusion involved, excluded the voices of parents, their support professionals or other sources who could have provided this information, or they did not know how to integrate the information, they resorted to the only model with which they are familiar - the deficit model. Their practices at the more distal levels, like those in the microsystem, were implemented in isolation from the schools' overall culture. The focus was on the individual and his perceived needs (or deficits), such as more resources, opportunities for remediation and specialised support. Parents' knowledge, which did not fit this paradigm, was devalued.

Overall, for children to experience facilitative inclusion and for a supportive infrastructure to maintain those outcomes, the most critical ingredients were:

- 1) A school with a holistic approach to children's well-being and development, sensitive to the diversity in its existing population, and engaging in practices, which characterise effective teaching.
- 2) A model of disability which focuses on the context and sees disability as part of, not distinct from, that context.
- 3) A vision of what successful inclusion might look like based on the social model of disability, adherence to that model at all levels and ongoing monitoring by all key players.

Historical connections with special education facilities, individuals or courses acted as an impediment to all of the above. The presence or absence of the three critical

ingredients determined the direction of all other practices. At both classroom and school level, where outcomes were successful, these practices were used to strengthen the existing culture by broadening norms and therefore enabling a greater range of children to be successful. For instance, the principal advocating for a trained teacher to team-teach enabled more adult support to be available for more children and the support and enjoyment these teachers derived from this arrangement enhanced their motivation to improve their inclusive teaching. Where outcomes were unsuccessful, all practices focused on the individual's deviancy, distinct from the existing classroom and school culture with no implementation or expansion of norms to embrace the kinds of diversity evident in any student population irrespective of the presence of the child with DS.

## **9.2: Contribution of this Research**

This thesis has furthered understandings of inclusion during the transition from preschool to school for children with and without DS by providing a holistic overview of the immediate and distal processes involved. A key contribution of this thesis has been the establishment of an operational definition characterising what it means for inclusion to occur at the chalk face (in the full range of roles typical for that setting). Much of the previous literature on inclusion has focused primarily on location (Cunningham, Glenn, Lorenz, Cuckle & Shepperdson, 1998, Whiting & Young, 1996), or organisational processes (Ballard, 1995, Clark, Dyson & Milward, 1995). Many studies have used only unitary measures generated by researchers, such as amount of time engaged in social interaction with peers (Espiner et al., 1985; Rietveld, 1986, 1989), teacher or peer attitudes (Cook & Semmel, 1999; Wishart & Manning, 1996), or use of paraprofessionals (Giangreco et al., 1997). Other studies have focused on the children's participation in regular settings while not specifying its nature (Ministry of Education, 1996b).

While all allude to important aspects of the process (for instance, one cannot experience inclusion if one is not enrolled in a regular setting), none provides a clear conceptualisation of the kinds of outcomes and processes we might envisage at the chalk face from participation in an authentically inclusive setting. What is meant by

inclusion is frequently raised as an issue by both teachers (York & Tunidor, 1995) and researchers (Ballard, 1999; Dyson & Millward, 1999), but without an adequate definition of inclusion, it is impossible to promote inclusive practices. This explains why even recent research studies advocate practices that can only result in exclusion. For instance, Hanson, Horn, Sandall, Beckman, Marquet, Barnwell & Chou (2001) view the role of special educators as being “able to modify and adapt the general education curriculum and support other teachers and staff members to implement special teaching strategies” (p.80).

This study’s data suggest implementing special education teaching strategies is precisely what is not needed. Instead, inclusion calls for a greater focus on effective inclusive teaching practices within an infrastructure supportive of diversity.

To be included as a valued member of the preschool, school or other part of the community required the children to participate in the full range of valued roles typical for that setting. This required participation as a valued same-status classmate, co-worker, partner or group member, schoolmate and friend as well as in more limited forms of inclusion. Participating in the complete range is an essential feature of everyday life (Meyer (2001). For example, being ignored is important when listening to a story or performance. Engaging in pleasantries is a typical way of interacting with relative strangers. It is problematic when children only experience less intimate forms of inclusion because the more intimate forms permit access to greater opportunities and learnings conducive to a quality life-style, which is denied to those excluded (Harlan-Simmons, Holtz, Todd & Mooney, 2001).

A key finding when analysing the full range of peer interactions between children with and without DS was that not all forms of inclusion were equal in terms of being developmentally enhancing to the participants. This contrasts with the position of the inclusion activists, Forest and Pearpoint (1993), who argue that it is not possible to be included only a little, in the same way that it is not possible to be a little bit pregnant. The data, however, indicate that it is possible to belong or be included in a small number of roles, which is not as facilitative to development as belonging in the full range of roles typical for that setting.



Apart from one teacher and school, the other preschools and schools had little awareness of facilitative inclusion. They perceived low level and inferior forms of inclusion as an inevitable consequence of the child's impairment and delayed development. Neil's exclusion was also interpreted as an individual issue with the teacher assuming his personality and personal choice accounted for his lack of belonging to a particular peer group or dyad.

An important feature of this study has been the method of data collection. Most studies have focused on inclusion from a "top-down" perspective, in which the construction of certain practices, understandings, categories and structures remain implicit (for example, Cunningham et al., 1998; Espiner et al., 1985; Hall & McGregor, 2000; Whiting & Young 1996). This study has investigated inclusion from the "bottom-up" through investigating the face-to-face interactions in the settings in which they were generated. The advantage of investigating inclusion in this manner enabled not only an identification of the constructs 'disability,' DS and 'inclusion', but also the processes used to either maintain or reconceptualise them. This enabled the effects of the educational setting on the child and the child on the setting to become transparent.

### **9.3: Agreement/Disagreement with past Research**

This study confirms the findings of previous studies that have shown that facilitative inclusion occurred where ideologies and school practices were deliberately and consistently implemented at all levels to accommodate the diversity in the student population (Erwin & Gunitini, 2000; Kliever, 1998; Rex, 2000). When the focus at the transition was on facilitating an inclusive environment at all levels of the school and roles and procedures were related to student diversity as a valued social construct, outcomes were favourable for all concerned.

The process of inclusion and exclusion for the children in this study was not different from the typically developing 12-year old children, who worked on a collaborative science project in Kollar et al's (1994) study. Even though both the high-status and low-status students all made similar minor errors, the two low status participants

(Lisa and Kyle) were reprimanded much more severely by the group than the higher status members. The same process was observed in both preschool and school settings in this study. For instance, Jonathan's class at school were regularly required to engage in silent reading as a group on the mat and it was not uncommon for children to select two books instead of one prior to sitting down. However, when Jonathan selected two books, his peers interpreted this behaviour as "stealing" and raised public concerns about it in the teacher's absence. Because Jonathan had already acquired the status of a deviant, his peers interpreted his behaviour that was acceptable in others as deviant. Because Kollar et al's study showed that this kind of behaviour occurred among typically developing children, it seems likely that these processes are not disability issues, but affect all low status children including those with identifiable impairments.

#### 9.3.1: Role of Task Structure and Evaluation

The data suggest that how tasks are structured and evaluated impacts on inclusion. However, unlike Bossert's (1979) study, a single-task structure per se did not appear to be consequential in itself. Ian's teacher used such a structure throughout the day interspersed with the use of smaller groups engaged in multi-task activities. When using single-tasks, however, she used multiple criteria to assess competence, and she also modelled ways of interacting with children who were new, shy or had limited expressive language such as Ian. Thus, the evaluative climate during whole-class and single-task structure activities was different to that used in Jonathan and Neil's room (and in Bossert's study) where single academic criteria were used to evaluate most single-task, whole-class activities.

### **9.4: Contexts**

The overall finding that contexts influence facilitative inclusion more than children's individual impairments adds credence to the claims of disability theorists (Abberley, 1987; Barton, 1998; Fulcher, 1989, 1990; 1995; Oliver, 1986, 1988, 1990), who argue that individual characteristics do not disable, but disability occurs as a consequence of participation in contexts which fail to cater for people with impairments. These results are also in agreement with studies (Bruni, 1982; Philips, 1997) that have

shown how children with intellectual impairments can be prevented from experiencing inclusion by school norms which do not accommodate children who move, behave and/or communicate in diverse ways. The existing classroom norms and practices in Neil's class mitigated against his inclusion because there were few opportunities for peers to interact and get to know newcomers. Both proximity and frequency of contact are critical ingredients for the development of more intimate relationships (Grenot-Scheyer, Coots & Falvey, 1989). When there were no social norms concerning inclusion, mostly single criterion tasks, a great deal of adult-directed teaching and no attention to seating or group placements, opportunities for getting to know multiple aspects of children's personalities are not available. That the context played such a significant role in limiting or enhancing opportunities for typically developing children (who have greater abilities to offset its effects) highlights the extent of its impact.

However, there are different implications for children with DS and typically developing children. The processes that occurred for the children with DS soon after their transitions to school became very entrenched, a finding also reported by Johnson and Johnson (1980). In the classrooms in which exclusion took place, the boys with DS (Mark and Jonathan) were seen as deviant members. They responded by adopting deviant roles (Mark as loner, Jonathan as a clown/oddity). These boys did not have the luxury of being able to adopt alternative roles. Because of their biological impairments, their "available psychological tools" (Milteneburg & Singer, 1999, p. 3) were insufficient for coping with the social and academic demands of their school environments. Neil, a typically developing boy, possessed a greater range of tools to help him cope with his exclusion from the peer group of boys. He adopted the role of 'serious student' during school time and invented creative activities on his own during free-play times interspersed with intermittent attempts at becoming an included member. When there was a change in class composition and the boys involved in the exclusion were no longer present, he was able to utilise the new opportunities and experience inclusion. Thus while the context was not conducive to inclusion, Neil was able to use his abilities to offset its effects in a way not available to the boys with DS. Neil's exclusion illustrates how an ineffective social context has greater implications for children with DS than for typically developing children and

fits in with Chris Kliever's (1998) view concerning how the construction of (dis)ability affects outcomes.

...if I chose to use the authority of disability science to isolate children with Down syndrome into a TMR classroom that provided no meaningful literacy experiences, in essence and through the power of definition, I could create illiterate, trainable mentally retarded children. If however, I recognized the children's right to be involved in classrooms reflective of the wider community, and if I opened up engaging literacy experiences, literate citizens would, in fact, emerge (p.14).

In essence, through Jonathan experiencing an ineffective social context where he was constructed as incompetent, deficient and deviant, he was excluded from the kinds of learnings conducive to culturally-valued outcomes. Given his impairment, he was unable to reconstruct into an alternative more socially acceptable role in the way Neil did.

## **9.5: Relationship between Findings and Theories of Disability**

### **9.5.1: Socio-cultural Issues**

The data lend support to socio-cultural theory (Leont'ev, 1981; Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978; 1981) as the case studies support the view that children construct their understandings of themselves, their competencies and their world, according to how they are included. For instance, the kind of peer interactions Mark and Jonathan experienced at school involved varying types of exclusion and lower forms of inclusion (see Chapter 4), which gave them the predominant message that they were undesirable and incompetent classroom members. They received these messages through physical distance, verbal content, unresponsive emotional and social responses and inclusion in demeaning and non-valued roles. This hindered their potential to access higher levels of mental processes as socio-cultural perspectives view such development occurring through interactions with more skilled partners. On the other hand, Ian's social interactions communicated feelings of competence and valuing as both an individual and a learner by providing opportunities for physical proximity to others. This enabled him to experience non-verbal and verbal communication, language content and structures, emotional interactive responses, mutuality and sustained attention, facilitative of higher-order processing. If children

are included in the full range of roles by peers who are likely to have adopted the roles valued by the school, then this is also likely to provide the basis of mutual scaffolding to higher forms of thinking (Vygotsky, 1978; 1981). For example, in relation to literacy, amongst other things, the data show that Ian learnt that books provide a valued tool for sharing and extending one's interests with classmates and friends. Through peer, teacher and parent feedback and spontaneously engaging in print-related tasks alone or with others, he learnt that he was a successful reader and writer and that participation in such tasks was a goal valued by his peers, teachers and family (see Section 7.2: Literacy and Inclusion and Section 7.3.1). In contrast to Ian, Mark is likely to have learnt that literacy is not valued for him for him at school, through his experiences of exclusion or minimal participation in literacy-based activities, although there is evidence that his parents valued it at home (see Section 7.3.1). It is not possible to know whether this provided a potential confusion of goals and values for Mark. Jonathan's inclusion in reading and writing groups did not take into account factors which specifically related to DS (see Section 1.5.3). Additionally, there was no accurate recognition of his entry skills by the teacher, both of which the data show failed to provide him with an entry point for successful participation.

He is likely to have learnt that reading and writing are unachievable goals for him at school. Through his spontaneous engagement in reading and printing at home (see 2.3.1, *iii*) and through participation with family members, he is likely to have internalised the message that he was capable of acquiring advanced literacy skills in the home setting. Unlike the classroom context, the home seemed to provide the conditions necessary for Jonathan to demonstrate and acquire further competencies in literacy. In accordance with socio-cultural theory, this example shows how development is socially constructed with the social context forming an integral part of the child's cognitive development.

In essence, the messages these children were receiving from their peers and the wider classroom context through their exclusion, low levels of inclusion or full inclusion, determined the kinds of connections they made with the subject matter, their understandings about themselves, others and their own competencies. Since the data

show that Mark and Jonathan did not participate in meaningful literacy experiences with their peers at school, there was no “meeting of minds” (Bruner, 1995) conducive to higher forms of thinking. This example from the data therefore provides a practical illustration of Vygotsky’s (1978; 1981) theory. The quality of the children’s social interactions is likely to have influenced their opportunities for cognitive development. That this process is fluid and not fixed by genetics as stated by Vygotsky, is evident from the changes in Ian’s social experiences when he left preschool to attend school (see Chapter 4). The data indicate that Ian experienced a greatly enriched social context after his transition to school. It seems evident then, that if social relationships remain fixed at the more primitive forms of inclusion or exclusion as socio-cultural theory would indicate, this will negatively impact on children’s intellectual development.

The full range of child behaviour evident in the data could not be fully understood or explained by Vygotsky’s theory of mind. It will be recalled that Mark was resistant to most forms of inclusion, no matter how benign and his loud complaints, anti-social behaviour and non-compliance (see Section 3.3.1, *vii*) interfered with opportunities for more advanced levels of inclusion. Socio-cultural theory assumes that children desire to be engaged in activities valued by their cultural communities, but the data showed that Mark regularly resisted participation in both school and home settings. Weisner (2002) also notes this limitation of socio-cultural theory and argues that “a broader, more inclusive view of the child and mind” (p. 377) would enhance its perspective.

Given that the social and the cognitive are intertwined according to sociocultural theory, the data provide little support for the behavioural model regularly advocated for children with intellectual impairments which was used to varying extents in both Mark and Jonathan’s schools. The assumption that there is an objective knowledge base external to the child which he can acquire through specialised step-by-step instruction is therefore dubious. As noted by Vygotsky (1981) and supported by Ian’s data, children need to participate in relationships that involve “voluntary attention, logical memory, the formation of concepts, and the development of volition” (p. 161) in order for them to develop more advanced psycho-social functions.

That children are not passive recipients of their experiences, but actively construct meanings in conjunction with those whom they interact also has implications for the social construction model of disability, which formed part of the conceptual framework for this study. While the strengths of this model lie in its focus on the role of contexts when facilitating or hindering development, rather than on the 'deficit' individual, there were instances when this model seemed insufficiently robust to explain all of the data. There were examples of the impairment (DS) interacting with the environment, which then had the effect of compromising opportunities for learning. One such instance was at news-time. Even though Ian extended his skills in this area (see Chapter 6), his limited range of expressive language restricted what he was able to say and his presentation was frequently interspersed with babbling and other more primitive forms of communication. This reduced the amount of intelligible speech, which in turn affected the quality of teacher and peer feedback, which is then likely to have affected Ian's learning and subsequent competencies. This suggested that the experience of exclusion and disability involved a greater level of complexity than a social construction that negatively affects people with impairments who do not conform to mainstream society.

Furthermore, this study shows that while the social context plays a significant role in a child's experience of inclusion or exclusion, adults' interpretations of that context may be at variance from the child's actual experience. What adults consider inclusion due to their interpretations of events may not necessarily resonate with the child's experience of the same event. In Chapter 4, I present an example of peers facilitating Ian's inclusion as they accept and some adopt his way of jumping instead of hopping on the hopscotch. While this would appear to be an excellent example of inclusion as the children expand the usual norms for the activity and thereby enable a greater range of children to be successful and included, this is merely one interpretation. It does not take into account Ian's subjective experience of the event, which may include sadness at not being able to hop like the majority of his classmates. His apparent enjoyment and laughing may also conceal real sadness at the limitations posed by his DS.

The data also indicate that the kinds of messages typically developing children received about differences that matter (DS) are mediated through the quality of their inclusion experiences. The same children from Ian's preschool who conceptualised him in unitary dimensions such as a 'not very nice boy' or 'naughty boy' reconstructed him as a valid classmate after their new experiences of him at school. In Jonathan's situation, identical understandings of incompetence evident at preschool were constructed by those same peers at his school and these became increasingly entrenched over time, irrespective of the change in setting.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that one of the key proponents of the social model (Michael Oliver) never intended the social model to explain the full range of exclusion experienced by people with impairments (Oliver, 1996). As noted by Tregaskis (2002), the social model was "intended as a starting point for discussion of the issues" (p. 458). Clearly, there are many facets to the experience of disability and inclusion/exclusion and not all the study's findings can be explained by the social model. First, the experiences of the children with DS were mediated by their impairments (DS). DS is a biological condition, which appears to limit (for reasons science has not yet fully explained), children's abilities to create alternate perceptually-valid roles for themselves in classrooms that do not meet their psycho-social learning needs. The result of this appears to be abandonment of the expected role of learner (of culturally-valued skills) and the adoption of non-valued roles such as 'naughty boy', isolate or class clown in which the child demonstrates anti-social behaviour. Second, it is not yet known how the varying mediating factors influence development or interact, but the various systems both within children and external to them will necessarily be dynamic and interactive. Finally, insufficient is known about the children's personal experiences of the situations presented in the data and it cannot be ruled out that these may be at variance from the researcher's or other adult's interpretations.

#### 9.5.2: Socio-political Issues

A basis for the study has been the writings of Barton & Tomlinson (1984), Fulcher (1988; 1989, 1990; 1995) and Oliver (1986, 1988, 1990; 1993). All these theorists acknowledge the role of power at the various levels of the social, political and



educational systems. Their perspectives range from Barton and Tomlinson's contention that changes in inclusion can only come about when society becomes more inclusive to Fulcher's view that the key to inclusion is a detailed analysis of how power manifests itself through the inter-relations of politics, society and educational institutions.

The struggle for power can be seen at all levels and is well expressed by Fulcher (1988) who states that "struggle is always about control: the attempt to gain control and achieve one's objectives" (p. 29). There were many examples of how the issue of power manifests itself in the current study. One such incident was during Mark's transition meeting when the teacher mentioned the subject of printing. Mark's mother, who had not offered anything spontaneously as yet, voiced her concern, "He used to write his name, but he doesn't do it any more." When none of the professionals volunteered any information and Mark's mother did not have the means necessary to exert a measure of control in the situation, the school won the struggle by default. Consequently, advancing Mark's printing did not become a priority in the classroom and his abilities in this area did not advance. Furthermore, Mark's teacher and professionals remained in control, but failed to recognise their own limitations in relation to Mark, his mother and potentially other children.

A fundamental ramification of power is policy. Fulcher (1990) states that inclusive policy can be effective but it requires a reconceptualisation of inclusion from an individual deficit or tragedy perspective to a socially and structurally inclusive one at all levels of the system. This is because the discourse at each level fundamentally affects the outcomes for individuals as she states,

Discourse is both tactic and theory about how that bit of the social world we wish to influence works. If we analyse the discourse and practices that social actors deploy in various arenas in educational apparatuses, we discover the various objectives they have in talking about special needs or integration. The themes may initially appear the same, but the objectives vary (p. 349).

This suggests that research is needed into how the apparatuses work. The current study is a grass-roots example of its working in a small number of preschools and schools. If the processes or apparatuses impacting on inclusion are understood, the probability of advantageously furthering the outcome for children is increased. The

present study has contributed to this end by beginning to illuminate some of the consequences of the apparatuses experienced by the consumers (the new entrant children and their families).

A further aspect of the concept of effective inclusion involves the participants' constructions of disability as this affects policy and practice. The research supports Oliver's (1993) social construct theory in that the environment must accommodate all individuals rather than individuals having to conform to "able-bodied assumptions" (p. 61). Oliver argues that "if disability is seen as a tragedy, then disabled people will be treated as if they are the victims of some tragic happening and circumstances" and policies "will attempt to compensate these victims for the tragedy" (p.62). This is in agreement with the research data. It will be recalled that Richard's teacher and principal perceived his impairment as a personal tragedy and behaved accordingly. Jonathan's teacher had firm ideas on the curriculum to be followed for the new entrants, regardless of their background or other factors. It was geared towards the abilities of white upper-middle class children from homes exhibiting an academic bias. The teacher's interpretation of the curriculum did not take into account Jonathan's DS or other children's individual characteristics. This situation mirrors Fulcher's (1988) contention about the curriculum being "this is what we should teach...we *will* teach this...and in *this* way" (p. 39). Jonathan's principal supported the teacher's approach. Mark's teacher engaged in practices that reflected the deficit model and the staff at Ian's school regarded Ian and all his classmates as individuals for whom a curriculum that was capable of variations was required.

The teachers' interactions mirrored those of the principals, who in turn developed their interpretations of inclusion from the professionals and sources they chose to consult. This points to the inter-relationships between the various aspects of the educational apparatus or agenda as described by Fulcher and illuminates Oliver's contention that the individual's enacted philosophy of disability depends on her/his definition.

The current data suggest a more optimistic perspective than that taken by Barton & Tomlinson (1984) and experience of inclusion can occur. They argue that

Given the inequalities within society at large, and given those dominant assumptions and practices that are firmly established in our school system...if integration is to have any major significance, then the struggle for its realisation must include a coherent, concentrated criticism of those unacceptable features of the education system and a demand for more fundamental social changes (p. 79).

While Barton and Tomlinson see the need for changing aspects of the school system and societal changes as fundamental to educational inclusion, the data suggest that this order of events is not essential for children to experience quality inclusion at school. Effective educational inclusion can also bring about societal changes. This was evident in my interview with Jacob's father, who was impressed with the way his son's classmates interacted with Ian and noted how well Ian was doing. Another example involved Ian's teacher and teacher-aide who were enthusiastic about the effects Ian's inclusion had had on their knowledge base and practices, other children's learning and their enhanced enjoyment of teaching. Due to their positive experience in facilitating an inclusive classroom, this teacher and teacher-aide would be likely to embrace the notion of inclusion in other aspects of their lives and therefore contribute to wider social changes. This issue of the bi-directional effects of effective school inclusion is presented more fully in Section 9.10.

### **9.6: Role of Transitions**

That the experience of inclusion and exclusion changed for children as they moved from one setting to another highlights the importance of the transition process. Transitions clearly provide a context in which new opportunities can be created. Once particular roles were adopted and certain types of interactions took place, they soon became entrenched behaviours. This was evident for all of the children except Ian whose teacher and teacher-aide deliberately created alternative patterns of interaction from his first pre-entry visit onwards and these began to take effect by the middle of his first week of school. While there were daily fluctuations in all the focal children's experiences, it was possible to predict their pattern of inclusion/exclusion at the end of their first term by how they were included at the end of their first week at school. That is, once a pattern of interaction was established which either included

or excluded the child from access to the full range of roles typical for the class, that pattern remained static, in the same way as described by Johnson and Johnson (1980).

The most pertinent fundamental difference in Ian's school was that the principal and class teacher demonstrated an awareness of the two different perspectives underlying disability, inclusion and difference and had the ability to translate the philosophy into practice. Ian's parents who were well-educated and had clear understandings concerning the philosophy of inclusion and how this might translate into practice had carefully eliminated all local schools where the staff alluded to practices based on the personal tragedy/deficit model. As Ian's school already catered for children's differences and were open to extending and/or altering their practices to include Ian, this opened up the possibility of further negotiations and the start of an effective partnership. How Ian was to be included, the way the teacher-aide was to be utilised, avenues for discourse, which agencies were to be involved were all arranged prior to Ian's actual entry. Through these negotiations Ian's principal developed a strong notion of what an inclusive school might look like in terms of philosophy and practices. Before enlisting subsequent involvement, he ascertained the focus of professionals involved with Ian's transition and utilised only those, whose main focus was on the promotion of an inclusive context.

On the other hand, Jonathan's parents did not go to the same lengths to select a school and negotiate the various processes needed prior to entry. Choice was complicated by their already having a child at the selected school. The potential differences in philosophies became evident at the planning meeting, where few practical details were finalised. A further element of uncertainty arose from the fact that Jonathan's teacher was not yet on the school staff. The differences in philosophy became increasingly rigid and evident over time, as issues relating to Jonathan's education arose. The school adopted a position of dominance and did not recognise Jonathan's parent's perspective, despite the latter's efforts to mediate the philosophical differences. The school recognised a deficit model, used professionals who also supported that model and rejected the parent's goals for Jonathan as unrealistic.

In the other two schools (Richard and Mark's), the different underlying philosophies (of the early intervention team and Mark's parents) appeared to go unnoticed by all concerned. Teachers and principals were eager to take whatever help was offered without ascertaining how this might facilitate the broader goals of promoting an inclusive environment in which the child and his classmates could experience facilitative inclusion. As these schools had no vision of what an authentically inclusive school might look like prior to these children's enrolments and had not considered that all students differ along a continuum of diversity, they defaulted to practices stemming from the deficit model. What happened during the transition when parents and early intervention staff arrived to discuss ways of including the child at the classroom level was that these school staff had no systems in place for integrating this information. The result was isolated attempts at instigating practices for the focal child, but no change in the school's overall culture to be more accommodating of the wide range of diversities in its student population. Hulston (2000) also reported this finding in her study of students with DS in regular classrooms at a secondary school and Bowd (1992) described a similar process occurring in Canadian schools. Because diversity was seen as a disability issue instead of an aspect of the human condition and a social justice issue, there were minimal or no existing practices in place which catered for any kinds of diversity. This lack of existing provision resulted in these schools' drawing upon the only model of special education they knew (the historical deficit model).

At Jonathan's school, the voices of the selected itinerant professionals (psychologist and mainstream support teacher) were usually upheld over the parents and early intervention team. The latter's suggestions were mostly ignored, concerns discounted, knowledges devalued and reports of Jonathan's behaviour at home distrusted.

In both Richard and Mark's schools, the parents and early intervention team were listened to as seriously as the school staff and visiting professionals. However, in Mark's school, the opportunities for his parents' involvement was minimised by the psychologist 'solving' the problems raised. Since Mark's parents did not create their own opportunities, their voices were indirectly silenced. In both schools, staff

reiterated in their interviews with me the importance of the issues raised, yet despite this, Richard and Mark experienced exclusion. What occurred was that all suggestions stemming from a social construction perspective of disability were interpreted within a personal tragedy/deficit framework. Thus, despite the good intentions of these schools, their existing pathologising structures, notions of 'normality'/abnormality, disabling practices and beliefs and unequal power relations remained intact and the outcome for the children concerned was the same as for Jonathan (exclusion) where the family and early intervention team were overtly silenced. Valuing the knowledge bases of all voices equally did not lead to the kinds of inclusive outcomes possible. Effective (inclusive) teaching practices based on sound pedagogical principles would seem to be needed as a basic foundation for integrating the information presented by parents and other professionals.

The almost universal school tradition of preserving the status quo (Cochran & Dean, 1991) raises the issue of 'voice' during the child's transition to school – whose voices are silenced and why, and whose voices are given credence? Murray (2000) suggests that when a professional view is challenged, the very basis of her/his professional identity is at stake. This may explain why parent-professional relationships are vulnerable to conflict and why the 'expert' uses whatever structural power necessary to retain his/her position. Sally Cartwright (1999) in discussing 'what makes good early childhood teachers?' speaks of effective teachers' possessing qualities such as inner security, mature self-awareness, kindness, courage and integrity as well as a sound theoretical bases to teaching and learning. It raises the issue whether educators who possess such qualities are subject to the same parent-professional conflict over inclusion as those whose self-development is more limited.

How schools viewed the child with DS extended to how they viewed the child's parents. In Jonathan's school, where Jonathan was expected to assimilate into the existing system, Jonathan's parents were labelled as "difficult," "searching for the unobtainable," and not having their child's interest at heart, "I hope that for the Jonathan's sake, they find what they're searching for" (teacher). In Richard's school, the parents were viewed as heroic, "they didn't ask for that (a handicapped child)," while in Mark's school, they were viewed as "realistic" (choosing a segregated

setting). Only in Ian's school were the parents supported as parents desiring the best for their child, without reservation or labels. The label attached to the parents affected the quality of the home-school relationship. Once Jonathan's parents were labelled as deviant (and inferior), it became harder for them to get their voices heard and the school became increasingly resistant to hearing their voices. Inclusion cannot be achieved in a context where key participants are silenced and assigned unequal roles, as this does not allow for the exchange of essential knowledge and resources. As noted by Chetkow-Yanoov (1999), a researcher on racial issues, "Participation calls for decentralized administrative structures-deliberately involving grassroots actors as well as representatives of the power structure in flexible forms of power sharing" (p.96).

Genuine partnerships informed by a sound knowledge base have yet to become a reality for most parents of children with DS as evident from these data. This finding is commonly reported in the literature concerning parents of children with disabilities (Brown, 1990; Ballard, 1995, 1996; Wartmann, 1997).

### **9.7: IEP Meetings**

The dual purposes of IEP meetings not long after the child's entry created conflict for most participants. This conflict centred on the need to portray the child in the most negative light possible to obtain maximum funding for teacher-aide hours and the need to produce a working document of realistic achievement and goals. Parents and teachers knew that if they portrayed the child as competent, they would be penalised by receiving fewer teacher-aide hours. The deficit model was reinforced by teachers wanting to secure the maximum number of hours available. Their focus on that goal made them less open to hearing what the parents and early intervention staff had to say about changing the context to facilitate inclusion.

It is possible that the label "individualised education plan" also encouraged a focus on the deficit individual model. At the core is the child's impairment with the focus on his special needs and how they can be managed. At both Mark and Jonathan's IEP meetings, the educators and professionals (excluding early intervention) attempted to

transform an essentially social process into one of behavioural techniques. This absolved their schools from taking responsibility for investigating how their social processes helped or hindered the children from becoming valued participants. This contrasted with Ian's transition meeting, which focused on supporting Ian and his family's aspirations, Ian's contributions and potential. The impact of DS on learning and other issues specific to Ian were interpreted in terms of how school practices could be altered to accommodate them. Ian's school did not have IEP meetings in order not to stigmatise Ian. Instead, weekly planning meetings for the whole class were held at which a portion of time was set aside for Ian's mother to join in and share any information. Adrienne Asch (1989) argued that IEP meetings for students with impairments only provides another way of stigmatising those students, (either all students should have them or none).

It is not so much that the child needs individualized evaluations and goals with which to measure progress, but that the school environment needs evaluations and goals with which to measure its ability to serve all its students....I am coining Programs for Education Accessibility (PEAs) to locate the problem where it belongs: in program accessibility and in the attitudinal barriers of teachers, and not in the disabilities and deficits of students. (Asch, 1989, p. 190)

The content of the IEPs revealed several shortcomings impeding their effectiveness. The school's choice of goals often focused on peripheral issues and goals already achieved, whereas the pertinent issue was the child's long-term progression in the curriculum area under consideration and how this was to be achieved. Parents were often not informed as to the details of the curriculum and more importantly, how to translate it into effective strategies they could implement at home. Other research concerning IEPs have reported similar findings (Stephenson, 1996; Thomson & Rowan, 1996). In the light of these findings, a review of the IEP system would appear to be beneficial.

### **9.8: Special Settings**

Mark's data are similar to the findings of other studies of children who experienced part-time inclusion (Biklen, 1985; Rietveld, 1989; Schnorr, 1990). Mark did not experience belonging in either the mainstream or special education classroom. In the



special class, most interactions failed almost instantly with neither party having the ability to repair the breakdown. Opportunities for interaction were limited in this setting because most of the teaching consisted of one-to-one teaching or engaging in a solo activity. In the mainstream classroom, Mark had only an hour each day in which to get to know the children. During this time, the typically developing children usually ignored him. The typically developing children did not see him as an individual with friends but as a member of the special class that they knew little about. Mark's educational experiences, which focussed on remediation (for instance, music therapy, visits to the toy library, behavioural teaching) were undertaken in isolation from his typically developing age-mates. Consequently, there were virtually no opportunities for Mark and his peers to experience meaningful shared activities on a frequent and consistent basis in order for more intimate forms of inclusion to occur. While regular schooling does not necessarily result in facilitated inclusion, the kinds of processes Mark experienced through part-time inclusion can only guarantee exclusion.

## **9.9: Implications**

Because facilitative inclusion is based on a different epistemology from traditional special education, a different focus is required for all facets of classroom and school culture. As has been shown in the data, preschools and schools can either enable (include) or disable (exclude). This suggests that schools and professionals supporting inclusion need to look closely at all their systems to ascertain whether or not they are inclusive of diversity or not. This section highlights concerns about 12 critical classroom and school processes or issues, which need to be addressed if children are to experience facilitative inclusion.

### **9.9.1: Differential or Inclusive Practices?**

Most of the educators and professionals involved with implementing inclusive education had not made the connection between the learning of the child with DS (or other label) and children generally. If a key aim of inclusion in schools is the promotion of inclusive communities, it makes little sense to use organisational strategies and pedagogies that serve to separate (and stigmatise) groups of children.

Furthermore, as noted by Tawney (1964), the mark of any civilised society is to reduce inequalities irrespective of origin, therefore teaching practices and pedagogies that highlight particular attributes over others, cannot contribute to this process. Hart (1992) described a more enabling perspective,

Rather than emphasising differences, we need a way forward which emphasises the *links* between special educational needs and the needs of all learners, and use those links constructively as a resource for improving learning opportunities for all children. (p. 10)

If differences are considered as a negative characteristic of the individual, rather than a reflection of the characteristics of the curriculum, the cycle of low academic achievement may be reinforced. Classing some students as ‘deviant’ or ‘other’ creates divisions of ‘them’ and ‘us.’ It justifies the exclusion of some students from the curriculum, thus depriving them of a just and equitable education. The individual is then blamed when he/she fails to achieve in ways expected. Clearly, the way to enable all children to experience facilitative education is to deconstruct the divisive processes and promote processes, which strengthen increased participation for all children.

#### 9.9.2: Assessing Inclusion

In view of all forms of inclusion not being equal and contexts playing such a key role in enabling or hindering inclusion, extensive information about the variables contributing to inclusive outcomes need to be regularly obtained. This ensures that children are actually experiencing the maximal benefits of inclusion. It is insufficient to be satisfied with parent and teacher reports alone that inclusion is occurring. These individuals may not be aware what facilitative inclusion looks like and the processes taking place for the child may not actually be conducive to inclusion. This suggests that observations need to form part of any assessment, bearing in mind that not all forms of social interaction are equal.

#### 9.9.3: Is Facilitative Inclusion the same as Effective Teaching?

As noted in previous studies of children experiencing facilitative inclusion (Erwin & Guintinni, 2000; Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman, & Schattman, 1993, Rex, 2000), the needs of children with identifiable impairments are not so different from

their typically developing age-mates and can be met when teachers expect and plan for diversity from the outset. This is hardly surprising in view of Vygotsky's theory of learning. The development of higher mental processes occurs through the internalisation of social interactions. Internalisation occurs when children are interacting with more experienced and knowledgeable others within their zones of proximal development. For children to gain access to such interactions, they need to experience safety or belonging as valued and respected members of their classroom community. This requires typically developing children to learn to interact with children who move or behave in unconventional ways. Such learning cannot take place if there are no opportunities. This cannot occur when a teacher-aide provides one-to-one teaching or the child is required to undertake separate tasks. It requires a common curriculum, which allows all the children to participate in the full range of roles, thereby enabling access to the scaffolding necessary to facilitate effective development. Where a curriculum area needed attention to facilitate a child's inclusion, the outcome was most successful, when the change was targeted at the group, rather than at the individual level. This was because the majority culture was changed and as noted by Bishop and Glynn (1999) "power relations cannot change unless both parties participate (p.132)." In contrast, where the majority culture remained intact, those who did not fit, were marginalised and had no access to that culture.

In view of children's tendencies to enter into unequal relationships with children with impairments, they need access to experiences, information and feedback within their zones of proximal development to help them participate in equal relationships. Ignoring the differences children notice (as occurred in Jonathan's school) only drives children's concerns underground. Young children having difficulty understanding disability (Lewis, 1995), often distort the nature of a child's disability in absence of meaningful and supportive learning. In all the settings except in Ian's school, the children appeared to view the disability as comprising the child's total identity, and assigned the child the role of deviant. They either excluded him from all but basic interactions or included him in inferior roles. This also prevented the typically developing children from getting to know the child as an individual and learning how to relate to someone, who may behave, speak and move in unconventional ways.

The classroom in which Ian entered already had components characteristic of effective teaching. Norms were established, which were cognisant of the range of diversity in the classroom, basic needs for safety were met, opportunities for children to become acquainted with multiple aspects of children's personalities were provided. Instead of the teacher providing the purposes of all activities, there were opportunities for children to initiate their own, with the teacher (and/or peers) providing scaffolding to enable the children to achieve their goals. Ian's teacher used teachable moments to facilitate inclusion and she and the teacher-aide reflected upon their practices, constantly adjusting them depending on what the children were doing and learning. They both emphasised warm trusting relationships with the children as the basis through which the children could experience the curriculum content. While these ingredients provided a strong basis for inclusion, the data indicated that they were insufficient in themselves without taking into account characteristics of the child himself. The existing effective teaching practices provided a foundation on which additional practices could be built to accommodate the specific child with DS. For instance, Ian arrived at school with anti-social behaviours that had the potential to alienate him from his peers. Also, his short stature and immature ways of moving, behaving and talking predisposed him to being treated as a much younger child. His way of perceiving and operating during cognitive and social tasks regularly differed from his typically developing peers. It was insufficient to ignore the impact of his DS and other presenting characteristics. Where such characteristics interfered with Ian's social and academic inclusion, the teachers showed that it was possible (and necessary) to deal directly with them. Facilitative inclusion requires both internal and external factors to be addressed in a way that focuses on making the overall class and school culture more accommodating of the diversities present.

Teaching practices can facilitate exclusion. For instance, the way tasks are undertaken can encourage exclusion irrespective of DS as children lack opportunities for getting to know one another. Lack of appropriate feedback concerning the processes underlying academic tasks is likely to affect other children besides those with DS. Where management is neglected, this can preclude many children from more meaningful participation, although the effects will be more significant for children with DS, given the nature of their learning difficulties. These become

curriculum rather than disability issues. Their significance was highlighted by the presence of children with DS or other at-risk students. These children's difficulties indicated deficits within existing practices (Biklen, 1985; Erickson, 1996; Slee, 1993).

#### 9.9.4: Role of Support Professionals and Paraprofessionals

For optimal development, children need to participate actively in the full range of roles typical for their age and setting. Access to these processes requires that in the public arena of the classroom children feel valued and do not have to hide or dismiss authentic aspects of their identities and understandings (Kunc, 1992; Stainback, Stainback & Moravec, 1992).

To promote learning contexts in which the knowledges and identities of all children are valued and respected involves changing the deeper levels of the school and classroom's culture as well as day-to-day classroom practices. These deeper levels include beliefs about disability and the type of language related to disability and other differences. This requires support professionals (educational psychologists and mainstream support teachers) who do not focus solely on the assimilation of the child into the existing system. This was the brief contained in the pamphlet for the mainstream support teachers (Mainstream Teachers' Support Service, 1991). What are required are inclusion facilitators who work at transforming both the deeper levels of school cultures as well as those at the classroom face. They need a professional understanding of disability theory as well as understandings of how particular impairments affect the teaching/learning process. Current local teacher-aide and special education courses for teachers and professionals focus on children's deficits in isolation from the classroom context (<http://www.cce.ac.nz>, 1997, 2001). A critical ingredient for all these roles (hands-on and professional support staff) is a philosophy, which views disability and other differences as social constructions. All practices should focus on the removal of cultural, political, social and other factors that hinder active, meaningful and maximal participation for all children. Deploying professional and practical staff who have had careers in special education without retraining in inclusive education is not the solution. The philosophies and practices of special education do not take into account deeper contextual factors and are based on a view

of learning unsupported by much current research (Nuthall & Alton-Lee, 1994; Schuler & Perez, 1991) and theories of learning (Rogoff, 1990; Tharp, 1993). The data in this thesis show that discrepant philosophies of ‘support’ personnel (both professional and practical) mitigate against the process of inclusion. Despite the successful outcomes experienced by Ian and his school, lack of ongoing professional involvement meant that there were still factors that hindered better outcomes. For instance, Ian’s behaviours and experiences during mathematics suggested that additional guidance would be beneficial. Alerting the teacher for the need to teach Ian error awareness and to help children distinguish between helping one another with clues or providing the answer or solution were two areas where professional guidance could have been helpful. Given that schools may not be aware of the differences in philosophies, it is of utmost importance that the ongoing professional support available has in-depth understanding of the policy, philosophy and practices of inclusion.

The data raise questions about the use of teacher-aides in promoting inclusion. The role of the teacher-aide in the 1970s was to “perform non-professional tasks previously performed by teachers” (Pilott, 2000). However, since inclusion has become policy, increasingly more funds have been allocated to the provision of teacher-aide hours to support children with impairments in regular schools and the role of the teacher-aide has evolved to include professional duties (Pilott, 2000). Giangreco, Edelman, Broer and Doyle (2001) believe that the teacher-aide’s role has expanded in the absence of an alternative theoretical model and/or efficacy data. Given that facilitative inclusion requires sound pedagogy and professional knowledge, and involves changing the existing culture to encompass diversity, it is inappropriate to employ non-professionals for this role. The most successful outcomes occurred when two trained teachers engaged in team teaching, actively promoting an inclusive culture. The most deleterious effects occurred when aides worked with individual children in isolation from class activities and culture. It may well be more effective using trained professionals for segments of each day to facilitate children’s inclusion than attach a teacher-aide to a child for longer periods of time.

### 9.9.5: Assessment of Children with DS

Teachers were often not aware of how DS affected performance in traditional assessment situations. As noted earlier, the child with DS is less likely to ascertain the purpose of the assessment tasks and what is expected of her/him. The reduced motivation to perform tasks perceived as challenging (Wishart, 1993) can lead teachers to underestimate their actual abilities and dismiss the voices of those familiar with the child on the premise that they are exaggerating the child's competencies. This was evident in the teacher's report of assessing Jonathan's sight vocabulary. Jonathan regularly said "Mum" throughout the list of words. Jonathan's teacher interpreted this to mean that Jonathan did not distinguish between the words on the list and the word, 'mum.' However, I had observed him reading many of the words on the assessment list in context (in books and word cards) at home, therefore he certainly knew some of them. What he may have been doing during the assessment was telling the teacher that he does similar activities with words at home with his Mum. Since the teacher did not understand him and Jonathan did not know any other way to communicate his message, he repeated the same message during the assessment. The teacher interpreted this repetitive communication as incompetence.

More traditional assessments run the risk of ignoring the adaptive functions of behaviour. It is therefore important that teachers use assessment procedures that are ecological or contextual in approach. These are more likely to provide a broader picture of the child's thinking processes, the conditions under which the behaviours occur and the adaptive functions of the behaviour. Such information is more conducive to facilitating a dynamic learning process (Vygotsky, 1978) than static outcome measures that are used when learning is conceptualised as a linear and passive process.

When a teacher judged the child's behaviours as deviant, this interfered with the gathering of information concerning a child's competencies (Kliever's (1998). For instance, on Jonathan's fifth day, peers excluded Jonathan from the group's reading-related activities by blocking access to the materials and activities, taking books from him and discussing what they saw as his incompetencies. When the teacher noticed Jonathan disrupting the matching word card activity, the teacher used his

‘inappropriate’/deviant behaviour as the reason for legitimising his segregation. “I think at this time he’s quite disruptive. He might be better off one-to-one with a teacher-aide.”

This kind of assessment serves to validate the deficit perspective. Jonathan’s competence at dealing with an intolerable situation (a string of episodes in which he experienced exclusion) was overlooked as were the contextual factors maintaining his exclusion.

#### 9.9.6: Role of the Teacher

The data highlight the need for teachers to expand their roles. Inclusion requires knowledge and techniques to facilitate the development of children whose skill levels and understandings are sometimes different or less-well advanced than those of the perceived majority. For successful outcomes, teachers need to address aspects of the hidden curriculum such as social norms. Given that not all teachers consider it their role to attend to such matters (Bergen, 1993), this requires the availability of appropriate (inclusive) support systems. Teaching all children inclusively challenges the traditional professionalism of both teachers and special education personnel. Parents have specialised knowledge of their child, which teachers need to access. This requires a genuine partnership where the knowledge of the larger dominant culture, such as a school system is not privileged over that of the minority, for instance a family involved in that system. If the knowledge of the parents is truly valued, then “how can old positions remain the same?” (Corbett & Slee, 2000, p.137). Inevitably, this calls for the role of the teacher to change.

If children are to experience facilitative inclusion, their teachers need to distinguish inferior from enhancing forms of inclusion. They need to attend more closely to the social dynamics operating in classrooms and understand how peer relationships develop as a function of the nature of the assigned tasks and classroom norms. Like gender and race, DS is an integral part of who children are. If children are passively or actively excluded on the basis of characteristics they cannot change, then their self-esteem will be negatively affected. Therefore, teachers not only need to promote positive and meaningful relationships among classmates, but also intervene directly



when children are actively excluded on account of characteristics integral to their being. As well as these aspects being incorporated into teacher training programmes, it would seem essential that professionals with a background in inclusive education alert teachers to these issues in an ongoing manner.

The data also suggest that teachers change their roles from deliverers of curricula to mediators of learning. This involves helping students to relate new experiences to their background knowledge and experiences, even if these experiences are expressed in unconventional ways. For effective learning children need to construct their own learning. They cannot do this if the material presented is not meaningful to them and classroom procedures allow for the ways of thinking, behaving and moving of only the dominant majority.

Facilitative inclusion requires that teachers do not put children into conflict over which roles to adopt. In Jonathan and Neil's classroom, the children's main (teacher-assigned) role was to adhere to the rules of punctuality, finishing tasks and staying focused. This resulted in Jonathan's classmates experiencing conflict over whether to help him when he transgressed or to ignore him (and their intuition) and just focus on their own compliance with the rules. Classroom norms need to help children to know the kind of behaviours that are most important. For instance, is it running to be first in line or is it waiting and walking over with someone who is unsure what to do and where to go when the bell goes?

#### 9.9.7: Children's Access to Processes

When a teacher insists that children partner the child with DS at an activity, despite their resistance and without providing the pair with access to a process to achieve meaningful participation this merely results in physical inclusion. As in curriculum subjects in which children are required to achieve specific tasks, they may follow the teacher's directions without actually understanding what was intended (Anderson, 1981). In Anderson's study, children completed their print-work without understanding the nature of the task. In Jonathan's class, children sat opposite one another at news-time without interacting or with the typically developing child doing all the talking. The pair had not been taught a viable process. When typically

developing children are required to engage in such inclusion, without support, it is likely to intensify initial suspicions of deviancy and fear, generate resentment and enhance feelings of discomfort. Such situations may also reinforce beliefs about the incompetence and deviancy of the child with DS.

Since children arrive at preschools and schools with different interaction styles reflecting the cultures of their families and not all styles are conducive to facilitative inclusion, it is important for teachers to establish social norms that widen the opportunities for everyone's participation. A style of interaction, in which the intentions of behaviour are not explicit, may be effective with others who share a similar style, but it is more likely to convey exclusion or inclusion into an inferior role to a child who cannot interpret the intended meaning.

#### 9.9.8: Parental Choice and Satisfaction

The prevalent emphasis on parent choice (Riddell, 2000) and satisfaction with/assessment of services (Pickering & Wilton, 1996) raises some critical questions in light of the data. First, parental choice is constrained by schools practising exclusion despite the law. Mark was not welcome in at least three local schools before his acceptance at a non-local school where he was enrolled into an attached unit with daily experiences of 'inclusion.' While it can be argued that his parents chose this option, it was certainly not a preferred or real choice as Mark's father stated, "It was the only choice...we had hopes that he would be mainstreamed." (final interview)

The choice was made in the absence of any real choice available or forced segregation as summed up by Ballard (1991). "Declining to take part is exercising choice. Being refused access to a school because of disability is a denial of choice – it is forced segregation..." (p.11).

Thus, while Mark's family reported being satisfied with Mark's education at the end of the IEP meeting and in their interviews, the satisfaction was related to their adopting lowered expectations for Mark. This was not because Mark was incapable of learning (if he could almost write his name on school entry, why could he not learn

to write other words?). However, because several regular schools had rejected Mark (and indirectly, his parents), the family reluctantly opted for segregated schooling. This resulted in them interacting with teachers and professionals who had low expectations and adhered to the deficit model of special education. When Mark's parents terminated their involvement with the early intervention programme when Mark started school, they used his special class teacher and psychologist as their new 'yardstick' from which they framed their expectations.

Second, the focus on parental choice/satisfaction enables the status quo to be maintained as essential knowledge (about inclusion) is deprofessionalised and attention is deflected away from sound or best pedagogical practices. In the data, parents, teachers, and specialist professionals did not always know what constituted facilitative inclusion. If parental satisfaction measures of choice and satisfaction are used in the absence of any pedagogically sound criteria to evaluate their children's education, children may be engaged in less than optimal processes. Smith and Barraclough (1996) queried the neoliberal view that parental choice and satisfaction are valid means of assessing the quality of children's educational experiences. Their concern about parental assessments of quality can also be extended to some teachers, principals and professionals. In this study some professionals and teachers knew less about inclusion than parents did. Special education has a long tradition of exclusive policies, philosophies and practices. These practices did not lead to optimal outcomes for children, even when parents, teachers or psychologists reported that they did. Inclusion requires an entirely different philosophy and processes from special education. It requires new ways of thinking about all aspects of education and disability. It therefore makes little sense to evaluate such complex processes by the perceptions of key participants alone, despite this being commonly recommended as evidenced in the following text.

If results show that the transition went smoothly and that individuals were satisfied with their level of involvement and the achievement of transition objectives, then the participants have information that will assist in the development of other successful plans (La Montague, Wheeler Russell & Janson, 1998, p. 253).

Richard and Mark's data in particular show that all participants were satisfied with their transitions and achieving the transition objectives, yet observations indicated that both boys were only included in a narrow range of roles which precluded their access to more advanced forms of development.

Through the parents' active participation in an early intervention programme staffed by qualified professionals with an overriding philosophy of inclusion (Champion, 1987), they had the opportunity to experience an alternative model of disability at potentially critical periods within their microsystems, for instance, at the child's birth or adoption, starting preschool. Consequently, all had alternative visions for their children, which did not incorporate the kinds of practices, beliefs, structure and values stemming from the deficit model. While Mark's parents eventually enrolled Mark in a school adhering to this philosophy, it was not without expending considerable effort in procuring a satisfactory inclusive education for him. That these parents had such a strong alternate view to the deviant ideology and continued to strive towards it, even when confronted by a resistant school such as Jonathan's, raises an important issue. According to Bart (1984) and Carpenter (1999), early intervention has the potential to maximise a quality life for the child and family, but if schools do not provide an inclusive education, then that quality of life previously experienced and envisaged is jeopardised.

#### 9.9.9: Inclusion: Choice between Academic and Social Development?

Parents indicate that when selecting a school for their child with an impairment and maintaining that option, they may need to choose between the social benefits able to be realised at a regular school and the academic and functional skills that they perceive can be more effectively developed in a segregated setting (Hanson et al., 2001; Ministry of Education, 1996c). Similarly, when reporting the benefits of inclusion, parents mostly refer to the social gains (Wolpert, 1996), without any reference to academic benefits. However, the current data suggest that parents should not have to choose between social or academic development. Where children experience the full range of social roles, effective inclusive teaching, a context, which takes into account factors specific to the individual and there is a genuine parent-school partnership supported by a strong knowledge base, the child can develop both

academic and social skills. Participation in ongoing friendships, inclusion in the range of roles typical for that setting as well as the acquisition of academic and other meaningful skills are all important outcomes conducive to quality living. Children's lives cannot be compartmentalised into discrete segments. If processes and outcomes in one area are restricted, then the child's overall quality of life and education are compromised (Biklen & Knoll, 1987; Billingsley & Albertson, 1999). The data indicate that having to select between segregated and regular settings to facilitate certain kinds of learning over another should not be necessary. It is possible for children to derive social, academic and other meaningful outcomes from participation in regular schools, provided schools engage in processes, which are enabling of facilitative inclusion.

#### 9.9.10: Equity

The finding that exclusion was occurring in all the preschools and schools except one regardless of the warm welcome the staff in these settings extended to the children with DS, indicated that the policy of inclusion was not being enacted at the chalk face. It also meant that the principle of equity was not being extended to these children and families as these schools and preschools were essentially catering for the majority and continuing to marginalise some of these children and their families. Ian's parents obtained favourable outcomes by possessing cultural capital (they had academic backgrounds and an extensive knowledge base concerning DS and inclusion) and luck (they happened to live near a school which attempted to practise inclusion). Even with these assets, they needed to expend considerable time and energy in enabling their goals. This raises major equity issues. If parents do not have the knowledge or for varying reasons are unable to fulfil the advocacy role, there is seldom an inclusive education professional to fulfil that role in an ongoing capacity (Brown, 1994; Hanline & Halvorsen, 1989). All professionals, apart from the early intervention team, whose role was to eventually terminate involvement, held perspectives stemming from the deficit model. It would seem then, that there is no accountability in the current preschool and primary school system to ensure that each child participates in an optimal inclusive learning environment. This implies that the rights of all children to experience facilitative inclusion irrespective of such factors as background, location of residence and perceived competence are yet to be realised,

despite the legislation (Education Act, 1989). Processes promoting exclusion remain the norm despite: i) charters requiring that schools provide opportunities for enhancing the learning of all students (see Mitchell, 1999), ii) National Education Guidelines requiring Boards of Trustees to analyse and remove barriers to learning (O'Rourke, 1993), iii) the New Zealand Curriculum Framework requiring teachers to value and respond appropriately to the needs of all students (Ministry of Education, 1993), increased funding for regular preschools and schools to include children with impairments (Ministry of Education, 2000/1) and the law (Education Act, 1989) entitling all children to an inclusive education. Enrolment at a regular school does not ensure children's experiences reflect the values underlying inclusion and obtain the potential benefits. The mere right to attend a regular school, although legitimate and necessary for facilitative inclusion, is an oversimplification of what it means to be included. Attendance has no value if children are included only in inferior roles and/or excluded from processes conducive to participation in the total range of culturally-valued roles. In view of greater numbers of children with impairments attending regular preschools and schools and (on the basis of this study's data), and the less than optimal experiences they are likely to participate in, the qualitative aspects of their experiences need urgent addressing.

Children can also exclude themselves from social participation with peers. It seemed, for example, that Mark did not have the skills needed for gaining and maintaining entry into a relationship with his peers. He regularly opted out of or negatively opposed opportunities involving social relationships. Alton-Lee, Diggins et al. (2001) also raise this concern when they describe how a new entrant Maori child declined participation on a topic she knew a great deal about. They argue that allowing her to opt out instead of providing a way for her to participate hindered her learning and contributed to the differential treatment and outcomes experienced by Maori (Clay, 1985). Since schools are meant to be about providing equitable opportunities for children (Ministry of Education, 1993), it seems important that teachers ascertain the bases for children's self-exclusion and provide the necessary scaffolding or management to enable such children to participate successfully.

#### 9.9.11: Special Education 2000

Recent changes have seen the implementation of a new approach to the funding of students with special needs with a view to improving their educational opportunities (Ministry of Education, 1999). However, the policy draws on two incompatible theoretical frameworks. In view of the present study's findings, implementing practices from the deficit/medical model and social construction model simultaneously is likely to hinder effective educational outcomes. When practices are implemented from the deficit model, they do not alter the school's overall culture and thus serve to separate the child from the rest of the school. Yet, the Special Education 2000 policy promotes several deficit-based practices such as, requiring individuals to be labelled, allowing special schools to be fund-holders for children included in regular schools with "the final responsibility for deciding the exact amount of resourcing required" (Ministry of Education, 1998), and supporting the retention of segregated settings despite the objective, "to achieve a world class inclusive education system" (Ministry of Education, 1996c, p. 2). Special Education 2000 also promotes the view that a school, which is open and welcoming, will provide a quality education. "For a child with special education needs, a school that is open and welcoming is the best possible assurance of a quality education" (Ministry of Education, 1996c, p. 4).

In all the case studies presented, both teachers and principals warmly welcomed the child and considered themselves open to providing a quality education for the child. However, what distinguished the school with successful outcomes from the others was their ability to distinguish between the model of disability they were promoting from the historical deficit approach and knowledge of inclusive teaching and other school practices.

A further issue of interest is that a review of the Special Education 2000 policy by Wylie (Ministry of Education, 2001) has resulted in several new initiatives, none of which is based on any empirical evidence of the kinds of social processes occurring in classrooms. As the Special Education Service is disestablished and its services transferred to the Ministry, it is of concern that the Secretary of Education states his commitment to "making real and sustainable improvements to the quality of special

education services” is largely through information gathered from “discussions with parent representatives, educators, SES staff, unions and other key stakeholder groups over the next six months (p. 1).” The views of the key participants form an integral part of any data collection. However, they do not necessarily reflect what is best practice. Richard and Mark’s parents, teachers and other school staff all indicated satisfaction with their experiences at school, yet the observations revealed a significant number of socio-cultural processes interfering with optimal outcomes for them, their peers and the school at-large.

#### 9.9.12: School Culture and Inclusion

Schools are a microcosm of the middle-class, conventionally-educated sections of society who adhere to individualistic models of learning and achievement. These models’ origins can be traced to societal changes which emerged in the nineteenth century (Corbett, 1999). To formulate an effective educational philosophy for the twenty first century, this background needs to be acknowledged and examined for its present effectiveness, given the fundamental changes in society and its structure, both current and likely in the future. Traditional models of school culture which operates in terms of middle-class values and practices does not allow the range of pupils now attending school to be successful as often there is a mismatch between the experiences and values of the students and those of the school staff and management, which can hinder effective teaching and learning. In some cases, a more powerful minority culture may impact on a school culture. Corbett (1999) cites Blackman’s (1998) research where the actions of a group of adolescent ‘New Wave Girls’ resisted the dominant school culture by refusing to be subjected to male domination in order to protect and validate their own identity. By their solidarity and through their intellectual ability, these students were able to mitigate the effects of and modify the dominant school culture. However, in the cases of Richard, Ian, Mark and Jonathan, more would be required on the part of the school culture to produce an equally optimal inclusive outcome. It is beyond the power of any year-one new entrant to change the system as evident by the case of Neil, let alone a child with an impairment, particularly an intellectual impairment.



Both these examples point up the need for a critical analysis and evaluation of the traditional school model. Since students from minority groups are less likely to be able to influence dominant and pervasive school cultures, it is up to schools to provide more inclusive practices at all levels of their systems. Schools can only do that by recognising that inclusive experiences are needed for students to live and work more effectively in the twenty first century, not only for intellectual attainment, but for functioning effectively in a rapidly changing society. On the basis of the data, a reformation of the school system to promote inclusion requires certain simultaneous changes in attitude and practices.

1. A recognition that all children can learn.
2. Parents and their support people need to be listened to with respect.
3. The diversity of modern society may require a recognition of a multiplicity of teaching strategies that resonate with the differing experiences of individual students, for instance, effective teaching is no longer conceptualised as a discourse delivered by the hierarchy analogous to the industrial revolution factory model.
4. The role of professional support professionals needs to be critically evaluated in the light of evolving educational philosophy.

A recognition by the political system of the developing significance of inclusive educational philosophy. As noted by Corbett (1999), “Inclusivity must be regarded as equating with educational excellence” (p. 61). As evident in the case studies of the children who did not experience inclusion, a system that is not inclusive jeopardises children’s chances for optimal development, therefore inclusion needs to be a fundamental criteria for assessing schools’ excellence.

#### **9.10: Bidirectional Influences (of Facilitative Inclusion)**

In line with Bronfenbrenner’s model, the data supported the notion that the quality of inclusion children experienced in their microsystems (classrooms) affected other systems in the same direction. The facilitative inclusion Ian experienced led his parents to retain their high aspirations for their son. It also resulted in parents of the typically developing children becoming enthused about inclusion as they noticed how their children included Ian in a variety of roles including out-of-school friend. During

the last interview with Jacob's father (about Jacob), he started the interview off by commenting how "incredibly well" he noticed the children in his son's class were supporting Ian. He added "and that's the way it should be." With the parents supporting the teacher and teacher-aide for their efforts, the teacher and teacher-aide supporting one another and the principal supporting all parties, the teachers were constantly reinforced for their work. In turn, they worked harder and put in many extra hours. They also reported enjoying their teaching more. These findings parallel Biklen's (1992) study of parents and inclusive education where he found that teachers were more motivated and worked harder when they were rewarded for their efforts and also when they felt part of a shared goal. In turn, success at the microsystem level created greater confidence on the principal's part to promote inclusion and the entire school community in feeling more favourable towards the concept.

In reverse, the lowered expectations and deficit model of disability adhered to by all participants in Mark's school negatively impacted on Mark's parents as they reduced their aspirations for Mark. His failure to achieve provided further impetus to the school personnel that he was not a suitable candidate for inclusion and that their efforts needed to be directed to providing more specialised teaching and facilities for children such as Mark. In Jonathan's school, his exclusion manifested itself in increasingly anti-social behaviour. No visible academic gains reinforced the staff's view that he needed more resources, took up vast amounts of teacher-time and lacked essential competencies. It increased the teachers and principals' anxieties about the merits of inclusion. While no data are available on the views of other parents, the principal reported that they were suspicious and wary of including children with impairments in regular classes, whom they perceived as taking away valuable teaching time from the typically developing children.

The benefits or otherwise of inclusive education are therefore not only for the children who participate in inclusive classrooms, but their effects can act as a catalyst or barrier to achieving a more inclusive society.

### 9.11: Limitations

While this study has contributed to enhanced understandings concerning the meaning of inclusion at the ‘chalk-face’ of the preschool and new entrant classroom and its underlying processes, it is not without its limitations. A key issue that needs to be borne in mind is that this study does not claim to have identified a product (the inclusive school) with a recipe for its success. As has been noted by others, (Ainscow & Booth, 1998; Ballard, 1999), “an inclusive school is an ideal never fully attained and inclusion is about changing processes; enhancing processes; enhancing participation and reducing exclusionary pressures” (Ainscow & Booth, 1998, pp. 97-98).

The findings of this study support this perspective. Using different methodologies, asking different questions and focussing more closely on specific issues, it should always be possible to uncover ways in which schools can enhance students’ participation and inclusion. Thus, while the data portray Ian’s school as an inclusive one, highlighting many favourable outcomes, there were both identified and potentially unknown factors that could inhibit maximal inclusion. In essence, while this study has contributed to our understanding of what is involved in (facilitative) inclusion, it does not claim to have identified all the necessary components and practices.

This study involved the total known number of children with DS about to start school in one New Zealand province during a particular year<sup>1</sup>. This precludes drawing conclusions about the entire population of children with DS. Instead, it presents detailed description of how the process of inclusion works before, during and after transition to school for the available population at the time. Of particular note is the gender bias in the sample with no female focal children involved when it is known that gender issues affect the success or otherwise of new entrants’ adjustment to school (Jordan, 1995; Norris, 1997). It may well be that the process of becoming included contains different elements for girls, given that new entrant girls have generally been reported to show greater social adjustment and fewer ‘problem’

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<sup>1</sup> An additional boy with DS was later discovered, but unable to be contacted.

behaviours (Jordan, 1995; Margetts, 1997).

Using observational methods with young children privileges the researcher's interpretation of events over the children's. While the use of these methods enabled information on children's everyday experiences to be gathered in a relatively unobtrusive way, it did not always allow access to all facets of the information such as the children's private world or their interpretation of events. Use of video-cameras and audio microphones as used in studies by Alton-Lee, Nuthall and Patrick (2000) and Alton-Lee, Diggins, Klenner, Vine & Dalton (2001) would have enabled more complete gathering and accurate interpretation of the data. For instance, Alton-Lee, Diggins et al., were able to offer several alternative interpretations of a child's initial reluctance to address the class through their use of multiple data gathering procedures. As well as enabling data-gathering on the children's individual experiences within public lessons, such equipment also enabled children's private speech to be recorded, something less able to be obtained unobtrusively through manual note-taking as noisy classrooms with little space often precluded access.

### **9.12: Researcher Impact**

Any researcher impacts on the phenomena under investigation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), even though in this study I used a variety of measures to minimise this impact. I was introduced to the children in the classrooms as "someone learning about what children do when they start school." This seemed to minimise the possibility of children distorting their interactions with the focal children in ways they considered would be acceptable to the researcher. Evidence of the children behaving anti-socially, for example, spitting at and physically and verbally hurting the focal children, despite my presence suggests that their behaviour was not significantly affected by being observed. The fact that comments from others, such as parents and teacher-aides supported the trend of my observational data further suggested that the observations reflected patterns of behaviour that were typical for that setting. In the kindergartens and play centre, the children were used to observers (there were students and parents at all the centres undertaking observations at the same time I was present) and the children did not appear distracted by this. At times, a child commented on an incident, for instance, when Ian poured water from the water trough

over a girl's head, the girl's friend commented to me, "Ian's not a very nice boy." In Jonathan's school, children hovered around me at play and lunch times more so than in any other setting. It will be recalled that this playground had very limited adult supervision and bullying occurred to both focal children. It is possible that many of these new entrants did not feel safe and staying in close proximity to the familiar, albeit passive researcher may have felt safer than risking hurt from classmates and older children. These children did offer comments about what they saw in the playground, which I would not have been privileged to if they had not been nearby. While I seldom perpetuated any of the conversations I usually acknowledged them and told the child I needed to keep writing.

As far as it was possible to ascertain, none of the focal children seemed affected by my note-taking. Neil's parents were concerned at the outset that my note-taking might affect Neil adversely, given his "sensitive nature." I assured them that I would not pursue the observations if they, the play centre staff, school staff or myself noticed any adverse affects concerning my presence. It was somewhat reassuring to learn from Neil himself towards the end of the school observations that my efforts to be unobtrusive had been successful as Neil approached me one lunch hour when he had been excluded by his peers and asked, "Why don't you watch me for a change?"

All the teachers were asked regularly what impact they thought my presence had in the classroom and acknowledged that it did impact, even if they did not or could not articulate its effects. None thought that my presence had a negative impact, in fact they seemed to value another adult's presence and interest, even if my role was a relatively passive one. The general thrust of the following comment from Jacob's first teacher typified the teachers' responses.

It definitely does [matter] no matter who you have. It's not a negative thing. It's just a presence and also it makes you feel like being sarcastic at times because I know you'll understand what I mean and they [the children] won't or sometimes it's really nice to have an adult in the room to share something with, although I'm aware that you're not really there to share. Otherwise it's lonely, it's very lonely, you can't actually say something adulty or um sarcastic.

Even though the teachers did not report it, it always remains possible that they may have done things differently if I were not present.

All the kindergarten teachers reported that the days of the observations were typical days for their centres and the focal child, except one teacher at Jonathan's kindergarten. She reported that he seemed less involved than usual which she attributed to my presence. This is plausible, although alternative interpretations could be that he had not attended kindergarten for several days due to illness and was reorienting himself again and/or he may not have felt completely well yet. The other two teachers in the same kindergarten did not think his behaviour was atypical or unusual for him, reporting that he tended to remain on the periphery.

One principal was less forthcoming in his interview than most other participants. He made reference to my prior role as support professional in facilitating children's inclusion and made it clear that he did not support my stance on unconditional inclusion, given the minimal amount of resources available to children with impairments. Awareness of this conflict in understandings affected our interaction. I was wary of pushing his boundaries too far for fear of his termination of the interview and therefore not having access to his information. I also suspected that the information I did receive was a sanitised approximation of his actual views, given his sense of unease and regular turning off the tape-recorder, while he said something he did not want recorded or thought of what he wanted to say.

The mothers all reported enjoying the experience and finding it beneficial in different ways. Neil's mother, who expressed some hesitancy at the outset due to the possibility of my observations negatively affecting Neil, reported at the conclusion of the data collection period, "It's been great having you there [in the classroom]. I'd never be able to get so much detail from the teacher as she's simply too busy." Richard's mother valued having her perspective taken seriously and the information being available for future teachers and families. Jonathan's mother appreciated having her concerns taken seriously and stated at the conclusion when I thanked her for her participation, despite the difficulties, "Thanks for your input too, Christine. It's given me courage." Jonathan's father liked the first item of feedback, in the form

of a conference paper on the children's literacy skills (Rietveld, 1999). He telephoned to convey his appreciation and stated that he had used some of the principles to guide his decision-making concerning issues related to his son's schooling. The parents' interest and enjoyment in taking part in this study and its impact on their children's transitions need to be acknowledged. It is possible that through their participation, that they paid greater attention to details that might otherwise have gone unnoticed, but by doing so, this altered the process. This was evident when parents rang to inform me of new developments or conveyed these informally during their child's arrival, departure or parent-helping at the school. An early intervention staff member reported that the "early and ongoing dialogues heightened my awareness and altered the way I saw inclusion. It changed the focus throughout the service." Participation thus raised this member's consciousness, which subsequently permeated throughout the team. The extent to which this impacted on the transitions of these particular children is unclear as the process of dialogue continued once official data collection ceased. However, given the ongoing, informed, reflective practices these staff engaged in as part of their work, it is entirely plausible that the questions and issues raised in the interviews resulted in heightened sensitisation to issues, which subsequently affected practices.

### **9.13: Future Research Directions**

As the study evolved, a number of further research questions emerged. The study involved a small sample of participants in a large New Zealand city. Would similar results be obtained if a larger or more diverse sample was to be studied? Another aspect of research could involve investigating these processes at other levels of educational settings. The current study involved only boys and therefore raises the question of whether the process would differ for girls. Further research might be longitudinal, covering the participants' entire school career, focussing specifically on subsequent transitions, for instance, from class to class, primary to intermediate and/or secondary school. This seems particularly important in view of what an early intervention staff member stated at the beginning of this study,

A transition can be a process that happens every time a child is placed in a new classroom. For some children, it will happen and be completely final but you cannot assume that they won't reach that point again at another point in the school and for some children, the transition is never complete. They go through school with no-one taking ultimate responsibility. Transition is something we ought to see in a wider context – not only for children with special needs.

Clearly children encounter many transitions through their educational careers and if optimal development is to be realised, first an understanding of what these transitions involve is needed and second, an application of this knowledge at the chalk-face. A particular concern arising from the study is the teaching of mathematics. Future research focussing on more effective teaching strategies in mathematics could be of benefit for all new entrants. The thesis data are now 9 years old and further research on current attitudes, practices and trends might prove informative. Areas of current interest would include whether there has been any positive evolution in more inclusive teaching practices and equitable partnerships among school staff, parents and professional and practical support staff in view of recent directions and policy statements. Finally, it would be useful to investigate the issues of transition and inclusion with more insights from the children themselves reporting their underlying motives and intentions behind their observed actions. Some of the observational data in the current study were limited in their usefulness to the data analysis as it was not possible to ascertain the children's exact purposes of their behaviours. Such additional information would add to the understandings already obtained as "children's views of the world do not necessarily reflect the dominant majority (adults who have power over them)" (Lincoln, 1995, p. 90). It is expected that data on the children's perceptions of their experiences will be more readily obtained as they mature as their receptive and expressive language abilities are likely to be more advanced.

#### **9.14: DS: Genetic or Contextual Factors?**

Like the previous literature concerning the learning of children with DS (Kasari & Freeman, 2001; Wishart & Duffy, 1990), the children in this study also tended to avoid tasks they perceived as cognitively challenging. For all the children, this



occurred mostly during mathematics and printing, even when some of the tasks involved skills they had already mastered. They also tended to persevere with immature strategies, which were not conducive to solving their problems.

At the same time, it is not clear whether this issue and some of the other factors pertaining to the learning of children with DS are genetic in origin and intrinsic to the child, or have remained 'fixed' on account of social/contextual factors. Given the long history of children with DS being excluded from processes that facilitate their inclusion into valued roles, it may well be that, with their participation in more effective processes, these previously-thought obstacles to learning have much less impact than previously thought.

It is not possible to ascertain what kinds of learning outcomes children with DS will be capable of in the future. However, it is envisaged that as more is learnt through investigating the processes they participate in, that it will be possible to create even more facilitative learning contexts. The results of this thesis have contributed a small part of that knowledge.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Letter inviting participation of Richard's school

Date

University of Canterbury  
Education Department  
Private Bag  
CHRISTCHURCH

[Principal's name]  
[Name of school]  
[Street number and name]  
[Suburb]  
CHRISTCHURCH

Dear Sir/Madam,

By way of introduction, I am a Ph.D. student in the Education Department at Canterbury University and I am investigating the process of transition to school for children with Down Syndrome. The main aim of the study is to find out about the kinds of issues that facilitate and hinder the mainstreaming of children with special needs into regular schools. It is anticipated that once more is known about the actual transition process, that more informed decisions could be made which will facilitate children's placements.

As you will be aware, Richard Jones who has Down Syndrome will be starting at your school in approximately four months time. In order for me to undertake this research, I am seeking permission to (1) observe Richard from time to time on school entry and for a period of up to 3 months after and also during any pre-entry visits that he might take part in, and (2) talk to you, his classroom teacher and other relevant persons throughout the transitional period about issues concerning his placement. I have spoken to Richard's mother about the possibility of your school being involved in this study and she has agreed to my inviting your participation.

As the nature of the research method is open-ended in terms of research questions, it is not possible to say specifically at this stage what will happen at each visit and how many visits will need to be made. This will need to be negotiated once the study gets underway. Since Richard will be the first child in my study, my potential involvement with you and your school will greatly assist me in formulating the sorts of questions I might ask other teachers, principals, families and professionals involved in the study. All

visits will be undertaken at times that are convenient to you and they will not require large amounts of your time.

All information collected will be treated confidentially by ensuring that no family, child or school is identified on the final report of the results or any other summary or statement involving the results. While the study will take 2-3 years to complete, all participating schools will receive a summary report outlining the main findings at the conclusion of the study.

I would be grateful if you would consult with the teacher Richard will have when he starts school about the possibility of her being involved in the study. I will telephone you in a few days' time to talk with you about the possibility of your school being involved in this research project. Thank you for your consideration.  
Yours faithfully

Christine Rietveld (Ms) PhD student

## Appendix B: Letter inviting participation (Parents of children with DS)

Date

University letterhead

Dear Mr and Mrs

As you are aware, I am about to undertake a Ph.D. research project investigating the school adjustment of children with Down Syndrome. The main aim of the study is to find out about the kinds of issues that facilitate and hinder the mainstreaming of children with Down Syndrome into regular schools. As you are probably aware, the mainstreaming of children with Down Syndrome is not always a straight-forward process. It is anticipated that once more is known about the actual process, more informed decisions can be made which will facilitate children's placements. Since [child's name] will be due to start school within the next year, I am inviting your family to take part in this study.

Participation in the study would involve mainly the following:

Observations of [child's name] at home, at kindergarten before school entry, then observations of [child's name] at home and school on school entry as well as some more observations some 2-3 months later.

Interviews and informal discussions with you, [name of child]'s parents, his teacher(s), school principal, Early Intervention staff and others involved with his placement.

As the nature of the research method is open-ended in terms of research questions, it is not possible to say specifically at this stage what will happen at each visit and how many visits will need to be made. This will need to be negotiated once the study gets underway. All visits will be undertaken at times that are convenient to you and all efforts will be made to be sensitive and supportive to your needs as a family. Visits will not require large amounts of your time in structured activities. Overall, they will be informal. My role is to find out about what your child does during everyday activities in the home, preschool and school and your experiences and ideas about your child and her/his schooling. All information collected will be treated in strictest confidence. No family, child or school will ever be identified in any way. In terms of my own involvement, I need to make it clear that I will not be able to be involved as an active professional in the transition to school process, so that if a teacher or other person asks me what they should do in relation to a particular issue related to [child's name] transition, I will have to decline involvement. My role in this project is basically that of an information-gatherer.

Copies of observations undertaken at kindergarten or school will be made available (once they are written up in full which may be some time after the actual observations) to the

teachers concerned.<sup>1</sup> Should you wish to see these, please do so through your child's preschool or school.

This study is being supervised by Professor Graham Nuthall of the Education Department, University of Canterbury. Should you have any further queries, please don't hesitate to contact me (Work: 667-001, Ext. 6607; Home: 668-593). I am hopeful of course that you will participate. However, I wish to point out that you are free to end your participation at any stage without any negative repercussions. When you have made a decision about your participation in this study please contact me. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely

Christine Rietveld (Ms)  
Ph.D. Student

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<sup>1</sup> This did not take place.

## Appendix C: Letter inviting Participation (Parents of typically developing boys)

Date

University letterhead

Dear Mr and Mrs .....

By way of introduction, I am currently involved in a Ph.D. research project investigating the transition to school for children with Down Syndrome. In order for that information to 'make sense' it needs to be seen against a background of what happens when typically developing children go to school. At this stage, not a lot is known about the transition to school for children with or without disabilities. I am therefore writing to seek your permission for [child's name] and your family to participate in this study, which will follow-through his transition into school. As you are probably aware, I contacted the Head Teacher/Supervisor at [name of kindergarten or playcentre] concerning a possible child and family who may be willing to participate and your name was put forward.

Participation in the study would involve mainly the following: (i) observations of [child's name] at kindergarten/playcentre for 3-4 days, observations of his pre-entry visits if these are undertaken, observations of the classroom [child's name] will enter a week before he starts school, followed by observations of his actual entry to school and for a period of time after.

(ii) Interviews and informal discussions with you, [child's name} parents, his teacher(s) and anyone else involved in this placement. There would be a parent interview about two months before starting school, around [child's name] fifth birthday, two weeks after and again two months after that.

As the nature of this research is open-ended in terms of research questions, it is not possible to be more specific at this stage about exactly how many visits will need to be made. This will be negotiated once the study gets underway. All visits to your home for interviews will be made at times that are convenient to you and all efforts will be made to be sensitive and supportive of your needs as a family. Visits should not require large amounts of your time and will hopefully be relaxed and informal.

I am hopeful of course that you would like to participate in this study and hope that it will be an interesting experience for all concerned. However, I wish to point out that you are free to end your participation at any stage without any negative repercussions. If you have any queries about it, I can be contacted at work (667-001, Ext. 8213) or at home (668-593). My study is being supervised by Professor Graham Nuthall of the Education Department, University of Canterbury.

In terms of my own involvement, I need to make it clear that I will not be able to be involved as an active professional in the transition to school process, so that if a teacher or other person asks me what they should do in relation to a particular issue related to [child's name] transition, I will have to decline involvement. My role in this project is basically that of an information-gatherer.

All information will be treated in strictest confidence. No family, child, preschool or school will ever be identified in any way in the final report or any publication or papers presented. Copies of observations undertaken at kindergarten or school will be made available (once they are written up in full which may be some time after the actual observations) to the teachers concerned.<sup>2</sup> Should you wish to see these, please do so through your child's preschool or school.

At the conclusion of the study, you will be given a summary of the research findings. I would welcome any comments or questions in relation to these and also any aspects of the study you may be concerned about as it takes place.

Yours sincerely

Christine Rietveld (Ms) PhD Student

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## Appendix D: Letter to Preschools inviting Participation

Date

University letterhead

Ms [Name of teacher]

Head Teacher

[Name of kindergarten]

[Street number and address]

[Suburb]

CHRISTCHURCH

Dear [Name of head teacher]

For my PhD research study, I am investigating the transition from preschool to school for children with Down Syndrome. One of the participants in my study is [child's name] who attends your kindergarten. I am writing to request permission to observe him for 3 or 4 consecutive mornings whilst he is at kindergarten. Also, at some stage, perhaps over lunch or at another time convenient to you, I would appreciate the opportunity to talk briefly with you and your staff (individually) about your experiences concerning [child's name] transition to school. I have spoken to Mrs ..... [child's mother] about my approaching you and she has agreed to this.

All information will be treated confidentially by ensuring that no family, child, teacher, preschool or school is identified on the final report or any publication or papers presented. I also wish to point out that you are free to end your participation at any stage without any negative repercussions. While the study will take 2-3 years to complete, all participating preschools will receive a summary report outlining the main findings at the conclusion of the study. My research is being supervised by Professor Graham Nuthall of the Education Department, University of Canterbury. If you have any queries about it, I can be contacted at work (667-001, Ext 8213) or at home (668-593).

I trust this will receive your favourable consideration and look forward to working with you on this project. I will ring in a few days time to discuss the possibility of my observing [child's name] at kindergarten and you sharing your experiences with me.

Yours sincerely

Christine Rietveld (Ph.D Student)

## Appendix E: Letter to Schools inviting Participation

Date

University letterhead

Mr [name of teacher]  
Principal  
[Name of school]  
[Street number and address]  
[Suburb]  
CHRISTCHURCH

Dear Mr .....

By way of introduction, I am a Ph.D. student in the Education Department at Canterbury University and I am investigating the process of transition to school for children with Down Syndrome. The main aim of the study is to find out about the kinds of issues that facilitate and hinder the mainstreaming of children with special needs into regular schools. It is anticipated that once more is known about the actual transition process, that more informed decisions could be made which will facilitate children's placements.

As you will be aware, [name of child] who has Down Syndrome will be starting at your school soon. In order for me to undertake my research, I am seeking your permission to talk with you and [name of child]'s classroom teacher about your experiences concerning his transition to school and to undertake some observations in the classroom before he starts, during his pre-entry visits, his first week of school and intermittently after that. Interviews about your experiences in relation to [name of child's] entry will be at times that are convenient to you, and my observations will not be at all intrusive. I will play the role of a 'fly on the wall' so that children should not be distracted by my presence. I have spoken to [name of child's] mother about the possibility of your school being involved in this research and she has agreed to my contacting you.

All information will be treated confidentially by ensuring that no family, child or school is identified on the final report or any publication or papers presented. I wish to point out that you are free to end your participation at any stage without any negative repercussions. While the study will take 2-3 years to complete, all participating schools will receive a summary report outlining the main findings at the conclusion of the study. My research is being supervised by Professor Graham Nuthall of the Education Department, University of Canterbury. If you have any queries about it, I can be contacted at work (667-001, Ext. 8213) or at home (668-593).

I would be grateful if you would consult with [name of child's] teacher about the possibility of her being involved in this study. I will telephone in a few days time to discuss it further. Thank you for your consideration.  
Yours faithfully

Christine Rietveld (Ms) Ph.D. Student

Note prior to Appendix F, G, H, I & J

For each child, there are three separate tables. The first table, concerning the semi-structured interviews, indicates who was involved, at what intervals throughout the transition the interviews were undertaken and for approximately how long. The second table indicates the context of the running record observations for each child (for example, preschool or school) or event affecting the child such as meetings when the observations took place in relation to the child's entry to school, the number undertaken in each context and their length. The third table outlines the type, amount and duration (where relevant) of other data collected, and when (in relation to the child's official entry to school).

Appendix F (i)

Summary of Semi-Structured Interview Data Included for Ian

Participants	No. of Interviews	Timing of Interviews	Duration
<b>Parents</b>			
Mother	3	i) 3 months prior to school entry	2 hours
		ii) 2 weeks after school entry	1.5 hours
		iii) 4 months after school entry	1.5 hours
Father	2	i) 5 weeks prior to school entry	2 hours
		ii) 5 months after school entry	1 hour
<b>Kindergarten Staff</b>			
Teacher 1	1	1 week prior to school entry	40 mins.
Teacher 2	1	1 week prior to school entry	40 mins.
Head teacher	1	1 week prior to school entry	1 hour
<b>Early Intervention Staff</b>			
Developmental Therapist	1	2 months prior to school entry	2 hours
Speech Therapist	1	6 weeks prior to school entry	2 hours
Co-ordinator	1	2 months after transition	40 mins.
<b>School Staff/Children</b>			
Classroom teacher	3	i) after Ian's first day	1 hour
		ii) during Ian's third week	1.5 hours
		iii) 4 months after school entry	1.5 hours
Principal	1	during Ian's second week	30 mins.

Teacher-aide	2	i) during Ian's third week	40 mins.
		ii) 4 months after school entry	1 hour
Classmates (5)	2 each	6 weeks after school entry	10 mins. each
		4 months after school entry	10 mins. each
Ian	1	4 months after school entry	10 mins.

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Appendix F (ii)

Number of Running Record Observations Undertaken in each Context, Duration of Observations and Timing in Relation to Ian's Entry to School.

Context	No. of observations	Timing of Observations	Total Duration
<b>Kindergarten</b>	4	last 4 days prior to school entry	7 hours
<b>Early Intervention Programme</b>	2	last 2 visits prior to school entry	5 hours
<b>Planning Meeting re Ian's transition for all involved</b>	1	2 weeks prior to school entry	1 hour
<b>School:</b>			
a) Pre-entry visits	4	week before enrolment	9.5 hours
b) First week	4	first 4 consecutive days	5 hours daily (20 hours total)
c) Following 5 weeks	5	2-3 hours per week	9.5 hours
d) Final follow-up	2	4 months after entry to school	5 hours
<b>Transition from Preschool to School Meeting</b>	1	end of Ian's first week at school	4 hours (day 1) 1 hour (day 2)

## Appendix F (iii)

### ‘Other’ Data Included for Ian

Description of Data	Number Included	Timing of Data Gathered	Total Duration (if relevant)
<b>Field Notes</b>			
a) Brief classroom observations of Ian and interactions concerning Ian	Many	Throughout all school visits related to Ian and some relating to Jacob	
b) Content of phone calls initiated by mother and 3 months after data collection ceased	4	After each semi-structured interview	1 hour
c) Comments made by mother before/after father interview	2	Prior to school entry and after 4 months of schooling	-
d) Phone calls to/from speech therapist (Early Intervention) about likely impact of presenting classroom data on family and transition	3-4	After kindergarten and pre-entry visits. Before official school entry	1 hour
e) Brief observations of Ian at home	5	After/during parent interviews throughout study	-
f) Informal conversations with peers at kindergarten	6	Throughout observation period	about 10 mins. in total
<b>Permanent Products (Child)</b>			
Spontaneous printing of name	4	i) Early Intervention ii) Kindergarten iii) 5th week of school iv) 4 months after school entry	
Colouring-in	1	5th week of school	
Spontaneous making of card for mother at developmental (involving print)	1	4 months after school entry	

**Permanent Products  
(concerning child)**

Early Intervention Report to School	1	Sent week before Ian's entry to school
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**School Information**

Handbook issued to parents on enrolling child to school	1	
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Appendix G (i)

Summary of Semi-Structured Interview Data Included for Mark

Participants	No. of Interviews	Timing of Interviews	Duration
<b>Parents</b>			
Mother	4	i) 6 weeks prior to school entry ii) 2 weeks prior to school entry iii) 4 weeks after school entry iv) 4 months after school entry	1 hour 1 hour 40 mins. 45 mins.
Father	2	i) 2 weeks prior to school entry ii) 4 months after school entry	1.5 hours
<b>Kindergarten Staff</b>			
Teacher 1	1	5 weeks prior to school entry	15 mins.
Teacher 2	1	5 weeks prior to school entry	15 mins.
Head Teacher	1	5 weeks prior to school entry	40 mins.
<b>Early Intervention Staff</b>			
Developmental Therapist	1	1 week prior to school	30 mins.
Speech Therapist	1	1 week prior to school entry	2 hours
<b>School Staff/Children</b>			
Classroom teacher (sp. class)	2	1 week after school entry	1 hour, 40 mins.
Principal	0*		
Teacher-aide	1	4 months after school entry	10 mins.
Classmates (6) a) 2 from sp. class b) 4 from regular class	1	6 weeks after school entry	10 mins. each

Mark

1

4 months after school entry 5 mins.

- 
- No interview with principal due to long-term illness

### Appendix G (ii)

Number of Running Record Observations Undertaken in each Context, Duration of Observations and Timing in Relations to Mark's entry to School.

Context	No. of Observations	Timing of Observations	Total Duration
<b>Kindergarten</b>	0*		
<b>Early Intervention Programme</b>	1	last visit prior to school entry	2 hours
<b>School</b>			
a) Pre-entry visits	2	i) Mark's 3rd actual visit** ii) Mark's 4th actual visit**	2.5 hours 2.5 hours
b) First week	5	first 5 consecutive days	24 hours (5 hours each day except first day)
c) Following 4 weeks	4	2-2.5 hours per week	8.8 hours
d) Final follow-up	2	2 consecutive days after entry to school	1.25 hours (day 1) 4 hours (day 2)
<b>IEP and transition to school meeting</b>	1	end of Mark's first week at school	1 hour

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\* No kindergarten observations undertaken due to Mark's hospitalisation for 6 weeks prior to school entry.

\*\* No observations during first 2 pre-entry visits as these coincided with observations of Jacob during his first week of school.

Appendix G (iii)

‘Other’ Data Included for Mark

Description of Data	Number Included	Timing of Data	Duration (if relevant)
<b>Field Notes</b>			
a) Brief classroom observations of Mark and interactions about him	Many	Throughout all school visits related to Mark	
b) Brief conversations with other teachers and mother at school			
<b>Permanent Products (Child)</b>			
Printing	1	4 months after school entry	
Colouring-in			
<b>Permanent Products (concerning child)</b>			
Early Intervention Report to School	1	Sent week before Mark’s entry to school	
<b>School Information</b>			
a) School handbook issued to parents at enrolment	1	School entry	
b) Content of imminent inservice course re children with special needs on wall in Mark’s classroom	1	4 months after school entry	
c) Notice of aims of developmental programme in corridor by junior area	1	School entry	

Appendix H (i)

Summary of Semi-Structured Interview Data Included for Jonathan

Participants	No. of Interviews	Timing of Interviews	Duration
<b>Parents</b>			
Mother	5	i) 6 weeks prior to school entry	1.5 hours
		ii) 2 weeks after school entry	1 hour
		iii) 7 weeks after school entry (after IEP meeting)	40 mins.
		iv) 8 weeks after school entry (after revised IEP meeting)	1 hour
		v) end of term/3 months after entry	1 hour
Father	2	1) 4 weeks prior to school entry	40 mins.
		ii) end of term/3 months after entry	40 mins.
<b>Kindergarten Staff</b>			
Head teacher	1	4 weeks prior to school entry	30 mins.
<b>School Staff/Children</b>			
Classroom teacher	2	i) 1 week after school entry	30 mins.
		ii) end of term/3 months after entry	40 mins.
Principal	1	1 week after school entry	1 hour
Teacher aide	1	end of term/3 months after entry	1 hour
Classmates (5)	2 each	6 weeks after entry	10 mins each
		end of term/3 months after entry	10 mins. each
Jonathan	1	end of term/3 months after entry	5 mins.

Appendix H (ii)

Number of Running Record Observations Undertaken in each Context, Duration of Observations and Timing in Relation to Jonathan's Entry to School

Context	No. of Observations	Timing of Observations	Total Duration
<b>Kindergarten</b>	3	second last week of kindergarten attendance	8 hours (approx 2.75 hours per day)
<b>Early Intervention Programme</b>	1	last visit prior to school entry	2 hours
<b>Planning meeting re Jon's transition for all involved</b>	1	6 weeks prior to school entry	1.5 hours
<b>School</b>			
a) Pre-entry visits	2	2 days prior to school entry*	a) 1.75 hours b) 4 hours
b) First week	5	first 5 days	5 hours daily 25 hours(Total)
c) Following 3** weeks	3	2-2.5 hours per week	6.5 hours
d) End of term	2	3 months after school entry and end of year	5.5 hours
<b>IEP meeting</b>	1	6 weeks after school entry	1.5 hours

\*Jonathan was already familiar with the school itself due to older brother's presence. Earlier pre-entry visits were considered of limited value due to new teacher not being present until this term.

\*\* Observations had to be terminated at this point due to Neil's starting school. Field notes concerning Jonathan continued to be collected throughout most of the term to compensate for this as Neil and Jonathan were in the same classroom.

Appendix H (iii)

‘Other’ Data Included for Jonathan

Description of Data	Number Included	Timing of Data Gathered	Duration (If relevant)
<b>Field Notes</b>			
a) Brief classroom observations of Jonathan and interactions about him. e.g teacher and mother	Many	Throughout all school visits related to Jonathan and Neil	
b) Content of phone calls initiated by mother	2	a) After revised IEP meeting; b) 3 weeks before end of term	a) 30 mins. b) 20 mins.
c) Content of phone call to mother	1	Beginning of second term	20 mins.
d) Brief observations of Jonathan at home	4	Throughout the study whilst interviewing parents at home	
e) Informal conversations with peers at kindergarten	6	On last day of observations	about 10 mins. in total
<b>Permanent Products (Child)</b>			
Printing	2	a) Day 4 b) During week 3	
<b>Permanent Products (concerning child)</b>			
Early Intervention Report to School	1	Sent week before Jonathan’s entry to school	
IEP (Individualised Education Plan)	1	Compiled at meeting 6 weeks after school entry	
Copy of parent’s perspective on mainstreaming - basis for new IEP	1	Compiled by parents as starting point for revising Jonathan’s IEP	

**School Information**

Handbook issued to parents on enrolling child	1	School entry
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Appendix I (i)

Summary of Semi-Structured Interview Data Included for Jacob

Participants	No. of Interviews	Timing of Interviews	Duration
<b>Parents</b>			
Mother	3	i) 4 weeks prior to school entry ii) 2 weeks after school entry iii) 4 months after school entry	45 mins. 30 mins. 40 mins.
Father	2	i) 2 weeks prior to school entry ii) 5 months after school entry	40 mins. 40 mins.
<b>Kindergarten Staff</b>			
Teacher 1	1	3 weeks prior to school entry	10 mins.
Teacher 2	1	3 weeks prior to school entry	10 mins.
Head Teacher	1	3 weeks prior to school	40 mins
<b>School Staff/Children</b>			
Classroom teacher	2	i) 5 days after school entry ii) 5 months after school entry*	1.5 hours 30 mins.
Teacher-aide	1	5 months after school entry	10 mins.
Classmates (5) from first class	1	6 weeks after school entry	10 mins. each
Classmates (3) from second class*	1	5 months after school entry	10 mins. each
Jacob	2	6 weeks & 5 months after school entry	10 mins.

\* Different classroom teacher and classmates as Jacob moved into another class

Appendix I (ii)

Number of Running Record Observations Undertaken in each Context, Duration of observations and Timing in Relation to Jacob's Entry to School.

Context	No. of Observations	Timing of Observations	Total Duration
<b>Kindergarten</b>	3	1 month before school entry*	7 hours 40 mins. (approx 2.5 hours per day)
<b>School</b>			
a) Pre-entry visits	2	i) 2 weeks prior to school entry ii) 1 week prior to school entry	1.5 hours 2 hours
b) First week**	5	Last 2 days of term 1 and first 3 days of term 2	5 hours each day (25 hours in total)
c) Following 4 weeks	4	1.5 -3 hours per week	8.5 hours
d) Final follow-up	2	5 months after school entry	4.5 hours

\*Unable to be done closer to school entry as family on holiday immediately prior to school entry.

\*\* Jacob's entry to school was marked by starting on his birthday which fell 2 days prior to the conclusion of Term 1, the 2-week school holidays, then back at school at the beginning of Term 2. His first 5 days of school were observed (i.e. the 2 days at the end of the first term and the first 3 days of the second term).

### Appendix I (iii)

#### 'Other' Data Included for Jacob

Description of Data	Number Included	Timing of Data Gathered
<b>Field Notes</b>		
a) Brief classroom observations of Jacob and interactions about him	Many	Throughout all school visits related to Jacob and some related to Ian
b) Comments made by mother after father interview	1	4 months after school entry
c) Informal conversations with peers at kindergarten	6	Throughout observation period prior to school entry
<b>Permanent Products (Child)</b>		
a) Printing		
b) Spontaneous printing of Name	2	i) Day 4 ii) 3rd week of school
c) Colouring-in	1	Day 4
d) Pre-entry assessment test*	1	Second day of school
e) Record of Oral Language**	1	Day 4

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\* Brief assessment (15 minutes) involving knowledge of colours, numbers, alphabet, shapes and the following skills: writing name, drawing a person, cutting out a shape, reciting a nursery rhyme, and matching cut-out shape to outline.

\*\*M.Clay, Gill, M., Glynn, T., McNaughton, S., & Salmon, K. (1976).

## Appendix J (i)

### Summary of Semi-Structured Interview Data Included for Neil

Participants	No. of Interviews	Timing of Interviews	Duration
<b>Parents</b>			
Mother	3	i) 1 week prior to school entry ii) 2 weeks after school entry iii) 4 months after school entry*	30 mins. 45 mins. 1 hour
Father	2	i) 1 week prior to school entry ii) 4 months after school entry*	30 mins. 40 mins.
<b>Playcentre staff</b>			
Supervisor	1	1 week prior to school entry	30 mins.
<b>School Staff/Children</b>			
Classroom teacher	2	2 weeks after school entry ii) 4 months after school entry	30 mins.
Classmates (5)	2 each	i) 6 weeks after school entry ii) 4 months after school entry*	10 mins. each 10 mins. each
Neil	2	i) 6 weeks after school entry ii) 4 months after school entry*	10 mins.

\* Excluding Christmas holidays (1 month)

## Appendix J (ii)

Number of Running Record Observations Undertaken in each Context, Duration of Observations and Timing in Relation to Neil's Entry to School

Context	No. of Observations	Timing of Observations	Total Duration
<b>Playcentre</b>	2	1 week prior to school entry	4.5 hours
<b>School:</b>			
a) Pre-entry visits	2	1 week prior to school entry	2.25 hours
b) First week	5	first 5 days of school	19.75 hours
c) Following 4 weeks	4	approx. 2 hours per week	7.45 hours
d) Final follow-up	2	4 months after school entry	6 hours

## Appendix J (iii)

‘Other’ Data Included for Neil

Description of Data	Number Included	Timing of Data
<b>Field Notes</b>		
a) Brief classroom observations of Neil and interactions about him	Many	Throughout latter part of data collection for Jonathan when Neil commenced pre-entry visits and throughout all school visits related to Neil.
<b>Permanent Product</b>		
a) Spontaneous printing of Name	1	Pre-entry visit to school

## Appendix K: Jonathan's Parents' Agenda for Meeting to Review Jonathan's IEP

### Our starting point:

We are primarily responsible for the education of Jonathan. It has not been an easy road to get Jonathan to where he is. Most parents can leave their children at school and know that they will get a reasonable end-product. Our experience has been that there is a tendency to set limits on what is achievable for children with Down Syndrome. Five years of effort and commitment have gone into getting Jonathan prepared and ready for school. A team of at least five people have worked for five years with us to bring Jonathan to this point and eighteen months of close relationship with kindergarten staff and Early Intervention staff completed those five years.

The school has accepted Jonathan as a child to be mainstreamed. The approach of the school to this situation is to regularise his learning via IEP planning meetings. Decisions are made at these IEP meetings on the basis of the input of the teacher, advisors and parents. So it is necessary for each to contribute their perception of where Jonathan is at so that reasonably informed decisions can be made.

To work as a team so that Jonathan gets maximum benefits from his time at school, we need to have a reasonable understanding of where each of us is coming from and the direction each would like to go.

Mainstreaming for Jonathan is being educated at his local primary school. It is not – putting him in the classroom and leaving him to sink or swim. Each child is different from the next: and my impression has been that most teachers are aware of these differences. For Jonathan to be successfully mainstreamed we need to recognise and acknowledge who Jonathan is and how he operates so that we can help him. Understanding his receptive abilities or accepting that his receptive abilities are different from the “average” child’s opens the doorway to good communication with him.

**ASK** teacher to tell us how she understands “mainstreaming”

**DOES** she see herself as needing to be personally involved in this process?

### INDICATORS:

Giving class or group instructions at a level that Jonathan can cope with.

Pairing or grouping Jonathan with children who are established in the appropriate area.

Ensuring that tasks are broken down to a level at which he learns and achieves completion.

Keeping in mind that the ideal goal is to enable Jonathan to achieve parallel to his classmates.

Requiring the teacher-aide to follow the teacher’s specific directions.

Ensuring that the basic academic and social areas are covered in the IEP.

## OUTCOMES

That Jonathan has got special needs and every endeavour will be made to meet them.

Acknowledging his different receptive abilities and he doesn't make automatic connections.

Concepts in one context are not automatically generalised.

Jonathan has to be given the skills to access the school environment.

Peer group or partner example – valuable teaching tool.

Appendix L: Statement from Jonathan's Parents reiterating their Perspective on Inclusion:  
Document presented to Teacher after Review of IEP Meeting

81 Kiwi Street  
Suburb  
16-11-92

re: Mainstreaming of Jonathan Smith

At our meeting today several understandings and situations were discussed but no affirmation or memorandum of agreement was set down. We would like to state our understandings and invite you to say if they form a frame-work that you would be happy to work from to ensure that Jonathan gets the utmost academic and social growth from his time at Bellbird School.

**MAINSTREAMING**

Jonathan is being included in the academic and social life of his local primary school. The word "mainstreaming" is used to indicate that Jonathan is a child with special needs. The reason that Jonathan is at Bellbird School is because the school has indicated that it will give an education that involves meeting and taking into consideration his special needs, in an "inclusive" environment.

**INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

The approach of the school is to allow the IEP meeting to reach a consensus on planning how each area of activity or time will be used. Jonathan's teacher will own the IEP program. Changes will not be implemented outside IEP meetings without the informed consent of the parents. Jonathan's teacher will call for IEP meetings every six weeks until the group decides otherwise. Unless otherwise agreed with the parents only school staff will teach or instruct Jonathan. IEP meeting participants will normally be: Jonathan's teacher, teacher support person, parents.

**ESSENTIAL INDICATORS**

Ensuring that tasks are broken down to a level from where Jonathan can understand, learn and achieve.

Initially giving class and group instructions at a level that Jonathan can cope with.

Pairing or grouping Jonathan with children, who are established in the appropriate area.

Keeping in mind that the ideal goal is to enable Jonathan to achieve parallel to his classmates.

Requiring the teacher-aide to follow the teacher's specific instructions.

**IMPORTANTLY**

We realise that we must relate to Jonathan at the known level of his receptive abilities. Where possible to protect or guide Jonathan in those areas where he is not able to look after his own best interests. Each of us believes that the contribution of each other is essential if Jonathan is to be given the best opportunities available.



## IN CONCLUSION

We place our signatures below to indicate that what is written above will be the basis of regulating Jonathan's education at Bellbird School.

Signed by Jonathan's parents

## Appendix M: Expanded Interview Guides

Table 1. Parents (mothers and fathers) of focal children prior to school entry

1. Description of process so far
2. Changes in professional support (DS only)
3. Helpfulness of existing and new professional support (DS only)
4. Factors influencing choice of school and level of involvement in choice
5. Consideration of other schools
6. Transition: time of stress?
6. Differences between transitions of older siblings (DS only)
7. Time-frame: start of transitional processes
8. Factors influencing school entry at 5 or 6 years of age (DS only)
9. Expectations of school in terms of child's education
10. Intended/expected role of parents in child's education
11. Worries about child's education
12. Thoughts on school readiness: meanings/relevance for child?
13. Meaning of 'mainstreaming' (inclusion) (DS only)
14. Child's understandings of school
15. Other issues

Table 2. Interview guide with preschool staff

1. Involvement in [name of child's] transition
2. Perceptions of transition process to date
2. Readiness issue
3. Main issues for child and family as child starts his formal education
4. Appropriateness of [name of school] for child
5. Appropriateness of special class/unit/school (DS only)
6. Understandings of mainstreaming (inclusion)
7. Preschool's involvement in preparing child for school
8. Description of child, strengths, areas of difficulty
9. Worries/concerns
10. Other

Table 3. Interview guide used with Early Intervention staff (speech therapist and developmental therapist) prior to focal children's school entry

### A: GENERAL

1. Critical factors contributing to 'successful'/'less successful' transitions
2. Issue of readiness: focus on child or classroom
3. Professional involvement after early intervention
4. Co-ordination of transition
5. Transition: time –frame
6. Local school or not
7. Other

B. SPECIFIC TO FOCAL CHILDREN

1. Involvement with [name of child's] transition and progress to date
2. Main issues for child and family on leaving early intervention
3. Professional involvement and issues
4. School readiness of child/school
5. Main issues for child and family as he enters school
6. Understanding of mainstreaming (inclusion)
6. Other

Table 4. Teacher interview during first week of child's entry

1. Teacher preparation/processes to date
2. Appropriateness of child's entry at this time
3. Appropriateness of child's mainstreaming (DS only)
4. Concerns/issues about child and avenues for dealing with them
5. Accessibility of information (DS only)
5. Relations with professionals (new and existing) (DS only)
6. Description of usual transition procedures
7. Ways focal child's transition differs from usual procedures
8. Previous experience in teaching children with DS or other impairments
9. Understanding of mainstreaming (inclusion)
10. Issues mainstreaming raises for (a) you as a teacher, (b) what you do in the classroom, (c) other children, (d) school in general (DS only)
11. Ideas on school readiness
12. Expectations for child's schooling
13. Expectations for parent's involvement
14. How one reconciles parent and teacher expectations
15. Aspects of school environment facilitative of child's entry to school
16. Other factors (in/out of the school) considered important for child's success (mainly DS)
17. School's policy on including children with impairments
18. Purpose of school for new entrants
19. Helpfulness of various professionals/agencies/information (DS only)
20. Role of professionals
21. Impact of child on classroom, workload, programme...
22. Role of the teacher-aide
23. Other

Table 5. Interview guide with school principals (DS only)

1. Description of preparation to date
2. Tasks undertaken to date
3. Tackling diversity – prepare class/school or not?
4. Staff preparation
5. Understandings of mainstreaming (inclusion)
6. Issues inclusion of children such as [child's name] raises
7. Perceptions of role in mainstreaming
8. Perceived benefits
9. Hopes/expectations
10. Experience with disability
11. School philosophy/policy on inclusion
12. Determining effectiveness of mainstreaming
13. School organisation
14. Reconciliation of parent, teacher and parent beliefs, aspirations
15. Concerns
16. Resources, professional involvement
17. Other

Table 6. Teacher-aide interview guide during child's first week of school

1. Preparation to date
2. Access to information and who from
3. Perceived role and how determined
4. Satisfaction to date
5. Issues arising

Table 7. Mother interview guide used two weeks after school entry

1. Evaluation of transition from a) child's and b) mother's perspectives
2. Change in roles/responsibilities
3. Changes in child
4. Emerging friendships
5. Leaving early intervention (DS only)
6. Home-school communication
7. Concerns/issues

Table 8. Interview guide used with child's peers 6 weeks after school entry

1. Likes and dislikes about school
2. a) Best friends, b) anyone else they enjoy playing/working with
3. Helpful children in the class and what they do
4. Children that cause problems and what they do
5. Focal child: enjoy playing with him and why/why not?
6. His friends
7. Things he is good/not good at
8. Things child is good/not good at
9. Other

Table 9. Interview guide used with focal children approximately 6 weeks after entry

1. Likes/dislikes about school
2. Friends
3. Helpful/unhelpful children and what they do (typically developing children only)
4. Understanding of differences between role at preschool and school
5. Preference: school or preschool
5. First day experiences (typically developing children only)
6. Other

Table 10. Final interview guide used with parents (separately)

1. Evaluation of transition to date
2. Changes/advances/developments in child
3. Friendships
4. Aspects of satisfaction
5. Issues/concerns
6. Quality of monitoring
7. Involvement of professionals and impact (DS only)
8. Home-school communication
9. Other

Table 11. Final interview guide used with classroom teachers

1. Evaluation of transition to date
2. Characterisation of end of transition
3. Changes/advances/developments/significant events...
4. Outcomes in literacy, numeracy, social relationships
5. Timing of daily departure at 3 o'clock; how decision was made
6. Factors contributing to things going/not going well
7. Issues raised by inclusion (DS only)
8. Home-school communication
9. Feedback from other parents and teachers (DS only)
10. Professionals: level of helpfulness (DS only)
11. Role of teacher-aide
12. Other

Table 12. Interview guide used for final interview with teacher-aides (Ian and Jonathan only)

1. Evaluation of transition to date
2. Significant events, outcomes, experiences
3. Child's progress
4. Teacher-aides's role – effectiveness in current situation
5. Communication [probe: parents, teacher, other professionals]
6. Philosophy/meaning of mainstreaming (inclusion)
7. Experience and training
8. Remuneration
9. Other